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DE QUINCEY'S WORKS.

VOLUME XV.

William Shakspeare

BIOGRAPHIES

OF

SHAKSPEARE, POPE

GOETHE, AND SCHILLER

AND

ON THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF MODERN ENGLAND

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Vol. 15.

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BY

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

EDINBURGH
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
MDCCCLXIII.

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PREFACE.

IN concluding this second edition of the Works of Thomas De Quincey, the opportunity may be taken of mentioning, that it is understood to contain all his contributions to periodical literature of any value.

The first edition, in fourteen volumes crown 8vo., was published by Messrs Hogg of Edinburgh, during the eight years, 1853–1860, and all the papers it contained, with the exception of a few in the last volume, enjoyed the Author's revision and correction.

In the latter end of the year 1861 the copyright was purchased by the present publishers, who immediately resolved to re-issue at a cheaper rate than hitherto writings which they felt assured only required to be made more available to be estimated as they deserved.

Their first intended publication was limited to the volumes as they had been left and arranged by the author himself, which they resolved to issue in the same order, with the exception of the slight transposition of "The Confessions" to the beginning, and the "Autobiographic Sketches" to the end of the series.

But as they happened to possess the biographies contributed by Mr De Quincey to the Encyclopædia Britannica, it occurred to them, towards the close of the issue, that a supplementary volume containing these would be an approved addition to this as well as the previous edition, from the latter of which the biographies were necessarily excluded.

At the same time they were so fortunate as to receive from an eminent publisher and friend, a valuable unpublished paper in his possession, "On the Political Parties of Modern England," written by Mr De Quincey towards the end of the year 1837, as a continuation of his article on "Toryism, Whiggism, and Radicalism," which appeared in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine. This also by the kindness of that friend they have been permitted to add to this volume.

The biographies were written by Mr De Quincey for the seventh edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, in the years 1838–9.

His own estimate of the Shakspeare contribution may be gathered from the following letter:—

"*July* 16, 1838.

"No paper ever cost me so much labour: parts of it have been recomposed three times over. And thus far I anticipate your approval of this article, that no one question has been neglected, which I ever heard of in connection with Shakspeare's name; and I fear no rigour of examination, notwithstanding I have had no books to assist me but the two volumes lent me

by yourself, (viz., 1st vol. of Alex. Chalmers's edit. 1826, and the late popular edit. in one vol. by Mr Campbell.) The sonnets I have been obliged to quote by memory, and for many of my dates or other materials to depend solely on my memory."

Subsequently he adds, "The Shakspeare article cost me more intense labour than any I ever wrote in my life. The final part has cost me a vast deal of labour in condensing; and I believe, if you examine it, you will not complain of want of novelty, which luckily was in this case quite reconcilable with truth,—so deep is the mass of error which has gathered about Shakspeare."

Notes, in which Mr De Quincey so freely indulged, were, in the case of the Encyclopædia articles, occasionally so long that no page but a quarto could have admitted them. In this reprint these have been dealt with according to his own rule, and placed at the end of the volume.

For the General Index the publishers are indebted to Mr Henry Benjamin Wheatley, who has with great pains selected his references, and made it a work of real utility.

EDINBURGH, *March* 1863.

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SHAKSPEARE.

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,* the protagonist on the great arena of modern poetry, and the glory of the human intellect, was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, in the year 1564, and upon some day not precisely ascertained, in the month of April. It is certain that he was baptized on the 25th; and from that fact, combined with some shadow of a tradition, Malone has inferred that he was born on the 23d. There is doubtless, on the one hand, no absolute necessity deducible from law or custom, as either operated in those times, which obliges us to adopt such a conclusion; for children might be baptized, and were baptized, at various distances from their birth: yet, on the other hand, the 23d is as likely to have been the day as any other; and more likely than any earlier day, upon two arguments. First, because there was probably a tradition floating in the seventeenth century, that Shakspeare died upon his birth-day: now it is beyond a doubt that he died upon the 23d of April. Secondly, because it is a reasonable presumption, that no parents, living in a simple community, tenderly alive to the pieties

* See Note, p. 312.

of household duty, and in an age still clinging reverentially to the ceremonial ordinances of religion, would much delay the adoption of their child into the great family of Christ. Considering the extreme frailty of an infant's life during its two earliest years, to delay would often be to disinherit the child of its Christian privileges; privileges not the less eloquent to the feelings from being profoundly mysterious, and, in the English church, forced not only upon the attention, but even upon the eye, of the most thoughtless. According to the discipline of the English church, the unbaptized are buried with "maimed rites," shorn of their obsequies, and sternly denied that "sweet and solemn farewell" by which otherwise the church expresses her final charity with all men; and not only so, but they are even *locally* separated and sequestrated. Ground the most hallowed, and populous with Christian burials of households,

> That died in peace with one another,
> Father, sister, son, and brother,

opens to receive the vilest malefactor; by which the church symbolically expresses her maternal willingness to gather back into her fold those even of her flock who have strayed from her by the most memorable aberrations; and yet, with all this indulgence, she banishes to unhallowed ground the innocent bodies of the unbaptized. To them and to suicides she turns a face of wrath. With this gloomy fact offered to the very external senses, it is difficult to suppose that any parents would risk their own reproaches by putting the fulfilment of so grave a duty on the hazard of a convulsion fit. The case of royal

children is different; their baptisms, it is true, were often delayed for weeks; but the household chaplains of the palace were always at hand, night and day, to baptize them in the very agonies of death.* We must presume, therefore, that William Shakspeare was born on some day very little anterior to that of his baptism; and the more so because the season of the year was lovely and genial, the 23d of April in 1564 corresponding in fact with what we now call the 3d of May, so that, whether the child was to be carried abroad, or the clergyman to be summoned, no hindrance would arise from the weather. One only argument has sometimes struck us for supposing that the 22d might be the day, and not the 23d; which is, that Shakspeare's sole grand-daughter, Lady Barnard, was married on the 22d of April 1626, ten years exactly from the poet's death; and the reason for choosing this day *might* have had a reference to her illustrious grandfather's birthday; which, there is good

* But, as a proof that, even in the case of royal christenings, it was not thought pious to "tempt God," as it were, by delay, Edward VI., the only son of Henry VIII., was born on the 12th day of October in the year 1537. And there was a delay on account of the sponsors, since the birth was not in London. Yet how little that delay was made, may be seen by this fact: The birth took place in the dead of the night, the day was Friday; and yet, in spite of all delay, the christening was most pompously celebrated on the succeeding Monday. And Prince Arthur, the elder brother of Henry VIII., was christened on the very next Sunday succeeding to his birth, notwithstanding an inevitable delay, occasioned by the distance of Lord Oxford, his godfather, and the excessive rains, which prevented the earl being reached by couriers, or himself reaching Winchester, without extraordinary exertions.

reason for thinking, would be celebrated as a festival in the family for generations. Still this choice *may* have been an accident, or governed merely by reason of convenience. And, on the whole, it is as well perhaps to acquiesce in the old belief, that Shakspeare was born and died on the 23d of April. We cannot do wrong if we drink to his memory on both 22d and 23d.

On a first review of the circumstances, we have reason to feel no little perplexity in finding the materials for a life of this transcendent writer so meagre and so few; and amongst them the larger part of doubtful authority. All the energy of curiosity directed upon this subject, through a period of one hundred and fifty years (for so long it is since Betterton the actor began to make researches) has availed us little or nothing. Neither the local traditions of his provincial birth-place, though sharing with London through half a century the honour of his familiar presence, nor the recollections of that brilliant literary circle with whom he lived in the metropolis, have yielded much more than such an outline of his history as is oftentimes to be gathered from the penurious records of a grave-stone. That he lived, and that he died, and that he was "a little lower than the angels;" —these make up pretty nearly the amount of our undisputed report. It may be doubted indeed whether at this day we are as accurately acquainted with the life of Shakspeare as with that of Chaucer, though divided from each other by an interval of two centuries, and (what should have been more effectual towards oblivion) by the wars of the two roses. And yet the traditional memory of a rural and a sylvan region, such as Warwickshire at

that time was, is usually exact as well as tenacious; and, with respect to Shakspeare in particular, we may presume it to have been full and circumstantial through the generation succeeding to his own, not only from the curiosity, and perhaps something of a scandalous interest, which would pursue the motions of one living so large a part of his life at a distance from his wife, but also from the final reverence and honour which would settle upon the memory of a poet so pre-eminently successful; of one who, in a space of five-and-twenty years, after running a bright career in the capital city of his native land, and challenging notice from the throne, had retired with an ample fortune, created by his personal efforts, and by labours purely intellectual.

How are we to account, then, for that deluge, as if from Lethe, which has swept away so entirely the traditional memorials of one so illustrious? Such is the fatality of error which overclouds every question connected with Shakspeare, that two of his principal critics, Steevens, and Malone, have endeavoured to solve the difficulty by cutting it with a falsehood. They deny in effect that he *was* illustrious in the century succeeding to his own, however much he has since become so. We shall first produce their statements in their own words, and we shall then briefly review them.

Steevens delivers *his* opinion in the following terms :— "How little Shakspeare was once read, may be understood from Tate, who, in his dedication to the altered play of King Lear, speaks of the original as an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend; and the author of the Tatler, having occasion to quote a few lines out of

Macbeth, was content to receive them from Davenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised or arbitrarily omitted." Another critic, who cites this passage from Steevens, pursues the hypothesis as follows :—" In fifty years after his death, Dryden mentions that he was then become *a little obsolete.* In the beginning of the last century, Lord Shaftesbury complains of his *rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit.* It is certain that, for nearly a hundred years after his death, partly owing to the immediate revolution and rebellion, and partly to the licentious taste encouraged in Charles II.'s time, and perhaps partly to the incorrect state of his works, he was ALMOST ENTIRELY NEGLECTED." This critic then goes on to quote with approbation the opinion of Malone,—" that if he had been read, admired, studied, and imitated, in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to make some inquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life." After which this enlightened writer reaffirms and clenches the judgment he has quoted by saying,—" His admirers, however, *if he had admirers in that age,* possessed no portion of such enthusiasm."

It may perhaps be an instructive lesson to young readers, if we now show them, by a short sifting of these confident dogmatists, how easy it is for a careless or a half-read man to circulate the most absolute falsehoods under the semblance of truth; falsehoods which impose upon himself as much as they do upon others. We believe that not one word or illustration is uttered in the sentences cited from

these three critics which is not *virtually* in the very teeth of the truth.

To begin with Mr Nahum Tate:—This poor grub of literature, if he did really speak of Lear as "an *obscure* piece, recommended to his notice by a friend," of which we must be allowed to doubt, was then uttering a conscious falsehood. It happens that Lear was one of the few Shakspearian dramas which had kept the stage unaltered. But it is easy to see a mercenary motive in such an artifice as this. Mr Nahum Tate is not of a class of whom it can be safe to say that they are "well known:" they and their desperate tricks are essentially obscure, and good reason he has to exult in the felicity of such obscurity; for else this same vilest of travesties, Mr Nahum's Lear, would consecrate his name to everlasting scorn. For himself, he belonged to the age of Dryden rather than of Pope; he "flourished," if we can use such a phrase of one who was always withering, about the era of the Revolution; and his Lear, we believe, was arranged in the year 1682. But the family to which he belongs is abundantly recorded in the Dunciad; and his own name will be found amongst its catalogues of heroes.

With respect to *the author of the "Tatler,"* a very different explanation is requisite. Steevens means the reader to understand Addison; but it does not follow that the particular paper in question was from his pen. Nothing, however, could be more natural than to quote from the common form of the play as then in possession of the stage. It was *there*, beyond a doubt, that a fine gentleman living upon town, and not professing any deep scholastic knowledge of literature (a light in which we are

always to regard the writers of the Spectator, Guardian, &c.), would be likely to have learned anything he quoted from Macbeth. This we say generally of the writers in those periodical papers; but, with reference to Addison in particular, it is time to correct the popular notion of his literary character, or at least to mark it by severer lines of distinction. It is already pretty well known, that Addison had no very intimate acquaintance with the literature of his own country. It is known also, that he did not think such an acquaintance any ways essential to the character of an elegant scholar and *littérateur*. Quite enough he found it, and more than enough for the time he had to spare, if he could maintain a tolerable familiarity with the foremost Latin poets, and a very slender one indeed with the Grecian. *How* slender, we can see in his "Travels." Of modern authors, none as yet had been published with notes, commentaries, or critical collations of the text; and, accordingly, Addison looked upon all of them, except those few who professed themselves followers in the retinue and equipage of the ancients, as creatures of a lower race. Boileau, as a mere imitator and propagator of Horace, he read, and probably little else, amongst the French classics. Hence it arose that he took upon himself to speak sneeringly of Tasso. To this, which was a bold act for his timid mind, he was emboldened by the countenance of Boileau. Of the elder Italian authors, such as Ariosto, and, *a fortiori*, Dante, he knew absolutely nothing. Passing to our own literature, it is certain that Addison was profoundly ignorant of Chaucer and of Spenser. Milton only,—and why? simply because he was a brilliant scholar, and stands like a bridge

between the Christian literature and the Pagan,—Addison had read and esteemed. There was also in the very constitution of Milton's mind, in the majestic regularity and planetary solemnity of its *epic* movements, something which he could understand and appreciate: as to the meteoric and incalculable eccentricities of the *dramatic* mind, as it displayed itself in the heroic age of our drama, amongst the Titans of 1590–1630, they confounded and overwhelmed him.

In particular, with regard to Shakspeare, we shall now proclaim a discovery which we made some twenty years ago. We, like others, from seeing frequent references to Shakspeare in the "Spectator," had acquiesced in the common belief, that, although Addison was no doubt profoundly unlearned in Shakspeare's language, and thoroughly unable to do him justice (and this we might well assume, since his great rival Pope, who had expressly studied Shakspeare, was, after all, so memorably deficient in the appropriate knowledge),—yet, that of course he had a vague popular knowledge of the mighty poet's cardinal dramas. Accident only led us into a discovery of our mistake. Twice or thrice we had observed, that if Shakspeare were quoted, that paper turned out not to be Addison's; and at length, by express examination, we ascertained the curious fact, that Addison has never in one instance quoted or made any reference to Shakspeare. But was this, as Steevens most disingenuously pretends, to be taken as an exponent of the public feeling towards Shakspeare? Was Addison's neglect representative of a general neglect? If so, whence came Rowe's edition, Pope's, Theobald's, Sir Thomas Hanmer's, Bishop War-

burton's, all upon the heels of one another? With such facts staring him in the face, how shameless must be that critic who could, in support of such a thesis, refer to "*the author of the* '*Tatler*,'" contemporary with all these editors. The truth is, Addison was well aware of Shakspeare's hold on the popular mind; too well aware of it. The feeble constitution of the poetic faculty, as existing in himself, forbade his sympathising with Shakspeare; the proportions were too colossal for his delicate vision; and yet, as one who sought popularity himself, he durst not shock what perhaps he viewed as a national prejudice. Those who have happened, like ourselves, to see the effect of passionate music and "deep-inwoven harmonics" upon the feeling of an idiot,* may conceive what we mean. Such music does not utterly revolt the idiot; on the contrary, it has a strange but a horrid fascination for him: it alarms, irritates, disturbs, makes him profoundly unhappy; and chiefly by unlocking imperfect glimpses of thoughts and slumbering instincts, which it is for his peace to have entirely obscured, because for him they can be revealed only partially, and with the sad effect of throwing a baleful gleam upon his blighted condition. Do we mean, then, to compare Addison with an idiot? Not generally, by any means. Nobody can more sincerely admire him where he was a man of real genius,—viz., in his delineations of character and manners, or in the exquisite delicacies of his humour. But assuredly

* A great modern poet refers to this very case of music entering "the mouldy chambers of the dull idiot's brain;" but in support of what seems to us a baseless hypothesis.

Addison, as a poet, was amongst the sons of the feeble; and between the authors of Cato and of King Lear there was a gulf never to be bridged over.*

But Dryden, we are told, pronounced Shakspeare already in *his* day "*a little obsolete.*" Here, now, we have wilful, deliberate falsehood. *Obsolete*, in Dryden's meaning, does not imply that he was so with regard to his popularity (the question then at issue), but with regard to his diction and choice of words. To cite Dryden as a witness for any purpose against Shakspeare, —Dryden, who of all men had the most ransacked wit and exhausted language in celebrating the supremacy of Shakspeare's genius, does indeed require as much shamelessness in feeling as mendacity in principle.

But then Lord Shaftesbury, who may be taken as half way between Dryden and Pope (Dryden died in 1700, Pope was then twelve years old, and Lord S. wrote chiefly, we believe, between 1700 and 1710), "complains," it seems, "of his rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit." What if he does? Let the whole truth be told, and then we shall see how much stress is to be laid upon such a judgment. The second Lord Shaftesbury, the author of the "Characteristics," was the grandson of that famous political agitator, the Chancellor Shaftesbury, who passed his whole life in

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* Probably Addison's fear of the national feeling was a good deal strengthened by his awe of Milton and of Dryden, both of whom had expressed a homage towards Shakspeare which language cannot transcend. Amongst his political friends, also, were many intense admirers of Shakspeare.

storms of his own creation. The second Lord Shaftesbury was a man of crazy constitution, querulous from ill health, and had received an eccentric education from his eccentric grandfather. He was practised daily in *talking* Latin, to which afterwards he added a competent study of the Greek; and finally, he became unusually learned for his rank, but the most absolute and undistinguishing pedant that perhaps literature has to show. He sneers continually at the regular-built academic pedant; but he himself, though no academic, was essentially the very impersonation of pedantry. No thought however beautiful, no image however magnificent, could conciliate his praise as long as it was clothed in English; but present him with the most trivial common-places in Greek, and he unaffectedly fancied them divine; mistaking the pleasurable sense of his own power in a difficult and rare accomplishment for some peculiar force or beauty in the passage. Such was the outline of his literary taste. And was it upon Shakspeare only, or upon him chiefly, that he lavished his pedantry? Far from it. He attacked Milton with no less fervour; he attacked Dryden with a thousand times more. Jeremy Taylor he quoted only to ridicule; and even Locke, the confidential friend of his grandfather, he never alludes to without a sneer. As to Shakspeare, so far from Lord Shaftesbury's censures arguing his deficient reputation, the very fact of his noticing him at all proves his enormous popularity; for upon system he noticed those only who ruled the public taste. The insipidity of his objections to Shakspeare may be judged from this, that he comments in a spirit of absolute puerility upon the name *Desdemona*, as though

intentionally formed from the Greek word for *superstition*. In fact, he had evidently read little beyond the list of names in Shakspeare; yet there is proof enough that the irresistible beauty of what little he *had* read was too much for all his pedantry, and startled him exceedingly; for ever afterwards he speaks of Shakspeare as one who, with a little aid from Grecian sources, really had something great and promising about him. As to modern authors, neither this Lord Shaftesbury nor Addison read anything for the latter years of their life but Bayle's Dictionary. And most of the little scintillations of erudition which may be found in the notes to the "Characteristics," and in the Essays of Addison, are derived, almost without exception, and uniformly without acknowledgment, from Bayle.*

Finally, with regard to the sweeping assertion, that "for nearly a hundred years after his death Shakspeare was almost entirely neglected," we shall meet this scandalous falsehood by a rapid view of his fortunes during the century in question. The tradition has always been, that Shakspeare was honoured by the especial notice of Queen Elizabeth, as well as by that of James I. At one time we were disposed to question the truth of this tra-

* He who is weak enough to kick and spurn his own native literature, even if it were done with more knowledge than is shown by Lord Shaftesbury, will usually be kicked and spurned in his turn; and accordingly it has been often remarked, that the "Characteristics" are unjustly neglected in our days. For Lord Shaftesbury, with all his pedantry, was a man of great talents. Leibnitz had the sagacity to see this through the mists of a translation.

dition; but that was for want of having read attentively the lines of Ben Jonson to the memory of Shakspeare,—those generous lines which have so absurdly been taxed with faint praise. Jonson could make no mistake on this point: he, as one of Shakspeare's familiar companions, must have witnessed at the very time, and accompanied with friendly sympathy every motion of royal favour towards Shakspeare. Now he, in words which leave no room for doubt, exclaims—

> Sweet swan of Avon! what a sight it were
> To see thee in our waters yet appear,
> And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
> *That so did take Eliza and our James.*

These princes, then, *were* taken, were fascinated, with some of Shakspeare's dramas. In Elizabeth the approbation would probably be sincere. In James we can readily suppose it to have been assumed; for he was a pedant in a different sense from Lord Shaftesbury; not from undervaluing modern poetry, but from caring little or nothing for any poetry, although he wrote about its mechanic rules. Still the royal *imprimatur* would be influential and serviceable no less when offered hypocritically than in full sincerity. Next let us consider, at the very moment of Shakspeare's death, who were the leaders of the British youth, the *principes juventutis*, in the two fields, equally important to a great poet's fame, of rank and of genius? The Prince of Wales and John Milton; the first being then about sixteen years old, the other about eight. Now these two great powers, as we may call them, these presiding stars over all that was English in thought and action, were both impassioned admirers of

Shakspeare. Each of them counts for many thousands. The Prince of Wales* had learned to appreciate Shakspeare, not originally from reading him, but from witnessing the court representations of his plays at Whitehall. Afterwards we know that he made Shakspeare his closet companion, for he was reproached with doing so by Milton. And we know also, from the just criticism pronounced upon the character and diction of Caliban by one of Charles's confidential counsellors, Lord Falkland, that the king's admiration of Shakspeare had impressed a determination upon the court reading. As to Milton, by double prejudices, puritanical and classical, his mind had been preoccupied against the full impressions of Shakspeare. And we know that there is such a thing as keeping the sympathies of love and admiration in a dormant state, or state of abeyance; an effort of self-conquest realized in more cases than one by the ancient

* Perhaps the most bitter political enemy of Charles I. will have the candour to allow that, for a prince of those times, he was truly and eminently accomplished. His knowledge of the arts was considerable; and, as a patron of art, he stands foremost amongst all British sovereigns to this hour. He said truly of himself, and wisely as to the principle, that he understood English law as well as a gentleman ought to understand it; meaning that an attorney's minute knowledge of forms and technical niceties was illiberal. Speaking of him as an author, we must remember that the *Eikon Basiliké* is still unappropriated; that question is still open. But supposing the king's claim negatived, still, in his controversy with Henderson, in his negotiations at the Isle of Wight and elsewhere, he discovered a power of argument, a learning, and a strength of memory, which are truly admirable, whilst the whole of his accomplishments are recommended by a modesty and a humility as rare as they are unaffected.

fathers, both Greek and Latin, with regard to the profane classics. Intellectually they admired, and would not belie their admiration; but they did not give their hearts cordially, they did not abandon themselves to their natural impulses. They averted their eyes and weaned their attention from the dazzling object. Such, probably, was Milton's state of feeling towards Shakspeare after 1642, when the theatres were suppressed, and the fanatical fervour in its noontide heat. Yet even then he did not belie his reverence intellectually for Shakspeare; and in his younger days we know that he had spoken more enthusiastically of Shakspeare than he ever did again of any uninspired author. Not only did he address a sonnet to his memory, in which he declares that kings would wish to die, if by dying they could obtain such a monument in the hearts of men; but he also speaks of him in his *L'Allegro* as the tutelary genius of the English stage. In this transmission of the torch (λαμπαδοφορια) Dryden succeeds to Milton; he was born nearly thirty years later; about thirty years they were contemporaries; and by thirty years, or nearly, Dryden survived his great leader. Dryden, in fact, lived out the seventeenth century. And we have now arrived within nine years of the era when the critical editions started in hot succession to one another. The names we have mentioned were the great influential names of the century. But of inferior homage there was no end. How came Betterton the actor, how came Davenant, how came Rowe, or Pope, by their intense (if not always sound) admiration for Shakspeare, unless they had found it fuming upwards like incense to the Pagan deities in ancient times from

altars erected at every turning upon all the paths of men?

But it is objected that inferior dramatists were sometimes preferred to Shakspeare; and again, that vile travesties of Shakspeare were preferred to the authentic dramas. As to the first argument, let it be remembered, that if the saints of the chapel are always in the same honour, because *there* men are simply discharging a duty, which once due will be due for ever; the saints of the theatre, on the other hand, must bend to the local genius, and to the very reasons for having a theatre at all. Men go thither for amusement: this is the paramount purpose; and even acknowledged merit or absolute superiority must give way to it. Does a man at Paris expect to see Molière reproduced in proportion to his admitted precedency in the French drama? On the contrary, that very precedency argues such a familiarization with his works, that those who are in quest of relaxation will reasonably prefer any recent drama to that which, having lost all its novelty, has lost much of its excitement. We speak of ordinary minds; but in cases of *public* entertainments, deriving part of their power from scenery and stage pomp, novelty is for all minds an essential condition of attraction. Moreover, in some departments of the comic, Beaumont and Fletcher, when writing in combination, really had a freedom and breadth of manner which excels the comedy of Shakspeare. As to the altered Shakspeare as taking precedency of the genuine Shakspeare, no argument can be so frivolous. The public were never allowed a choice; the great majority of an audience even now cannot be expected to carry the real Shakspeare in

their mind, so as to pursue a comparison between that and the alteration. Their comparisons must be exclusively amongst what they have opportunities of seeing; that is, between the various pieces presented to them by the managers of theatres. Further than this it is impossible for them to extend their office of judging and collating; and the degenerate taste which substituted the caprices of Davenant, the rants of Dryden, or the filth of Tate, for the jewellery of Shakspeare, cannot with any justice be charged upon the public, not one in a thousand of whom was furnished with any means of comparing, but exclusively upon those (viz., theatrical managers) who had the very amplest. Yet even in excuse for *them* much may be said. The very length of some plays compelled them to make alterations. The best of Shakspeare's dramas, King Lear, is the least fitted for representation; and, even for the vilest alteration, it ought in candour to be considered that possession is nine points of the law. He who would not have introduced, was often obliged to retain.

Finally, it is urged, that the small number of editions through which Shakspeare passed in the seventeenth century, furnishes a separate argument, and a conclusive one, against his popularity. We answer, that, considering the bulk of his plays collectively, the editions were *not* few: compared with any known case, the copies sold of Shakspeare were quite as many as could be expected under the circumstances. Ten or fifteen times as much consideration went to the purchase of one great folio like Shakspeare, as would attend the purchase of a little volume like Waller or Donne. Without reviews, or newspapers.

or advertisements to diffuse the knowledge of books, the progress of literature was necessarily slow, and its expansion narrow. But this is a topic which has always been treated unfairly, not with regard to Shakspeare only, but to Milton, as well as many others. The truth is, we have not facts enough to guide us; for the number of editions often tells nothing accurately as to the number of copies. With respect to Shakspeare it is certain, that, had his masterpieces been gathered into small volumes, Shakspeare would have had a most extensive sale. As it was, there can be no doubt, that from his own generation, throughout the seventeenth century, and until the eighteenth began to accommodate, not any greater popularity in *him*, but a greater taste for reading in the public, his fame never ceased to be viewed as a national trophy of honour; and the most illustrious men of the seventeenth century were no whit less fervent in their admiration than those of the eighteenth and the nineteenth, either as respected its strength and sincerity, or as respected its open profession.*

It is therefore a false notion, that the general sympathy with the merits of Shakspeare ever beat with a languid or intermitting pulse. Undoubtedly, in times when the functions of critical journals and of newspapers were not at hand to diffuse or to strengthen the impressions which emanated from the capital, all opinions must have travelled slowly into the provinces. But even then, whilst the perfect organs of communication were wanting, indirect substitutes were supplied by the necessities of the times, or by the instincts of political zeal. Two channels especially

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* See note, p. 313.

lay open between the great central organ of the national mind, and the remotest provinces. Parliaments were occasionally summoned (for the judges' circuits were too brief to produce much effect); and during their longest suspensions, the nobility, with large retinues, continually resorted to the court. But an intercourse more constant and more comprehensive was maintained through the agency of the two universities. Already, in the time of James I., the growing importance of the gentry, and the consequent birth of a new interest in political questions, had begun to express itself at Oxford, and still more so at Cambridge. Academic persons stationed themselves as sentinels at London, for the purpose of watching the court and the course of public affairs. These persons wrote letters, like those of the celebrated Joseph Mede, which we find in Ellis's Historical Collections, reporting to their fellow-collegians all the novelties of public life as they arose, or personally carried down such reports, and thus conducted the general feelings at the centre into lesser centres, from which again they were diffused into the ten thousand parishes of England; for (with a very few exceptions in favour of poor benefices, Welch or Cumbrian), every parish priest must unavoidably have spent his three years at one or other of the English universities. And by this mode of diffusion it is that we can explain the strength with which Shakspeare's thoughts and diction impressed themselves from a very early period upon the national literature, and even more generally upon the national thinking and conversation.*

* One of the profoundest tests by which we can measure the congeniality of an author with the national genius and temper, is the

The question therefore revolves upon us in threefold difficulty. How, having stepped thus prematurely into this inheritance of fame, leaping, as it were, thus abruptly into the favour alike of princes and the enemies of princes, had it become possible that in his native place (honoured still more in the final testimonies of his preference when founding a family mansion), such a man's history, and the personal recollections which cling so affectionately to the great intellectual potentates who have recommended themselves by gracious manners, could so soon and so utterly have been obliterated?

Malone, with childish irreflection, ascribes the loss of such memorials to the want of enthusiasm in his admirers. Local researches into private history had not then commenced. Such a taste, often petty enough in its management, was the growth of after-ages. Else how came Spenser's life and fortunes to be so utterly overwhelmed in oblivion? No poet of a high order could be more popular.

The answer we believe to be this: Twenty-six years after Shakspeare's death commenced the great parliamen-

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degree in which his thoughts or his phrases interweave themselves with our daily conversation, and pass into the currency of the language. *Few French authors, if any, have imparted one phrase to the colloquial idiom;* with respect to Shakspeare, a large dictionary might be made of such phrases as "win golden opinions," "in my mind's eye," "patience on a monument," "o'erstep the modesty of nature," "more honour'd in the breach than in the observance," "palmy state," "my poverty and not my will consents," and so forth, without end. This reinforcement of the general language, by aids from the mintage of Shakspeare, had already commenced in the seventeenth century.

tary war: this it was, and the local feuds arising to divide family from family, brother from brother, upon which we must charge the extinction of traditions and memorials, doubtless abundant up to that era. The parliamentary contest, it will be said, did not last above three years; the king's standard having been first raised at Nottingham in August 1642, and the battle of Naseby (which terminated the open warfare) having been fought in June 1645. Or even if we extend its duration to the surrender of the last garrison, that war terminated in the spring of 1646. And the brief explosions of insurrection or of Scottish invasion which occurred on subsequent occasions were all locally confined; and none came near to Warwickshire, except the battle of Worcester, more than five years after. This is true; but a short war will do much to efface recent and merely personal memorials. And the following circumstances of the war were even more important than the general fact.

First of all, the very mansion founded by Shakspeare became the military head-quarters for the queen in 1644, when marching from the eastern coast of England to join the king in Oxford; and one such special visitation would be likely to do more serious mischief in the way of extinction than many years of general warfare. Secondly, as a fact, perhaps, equally important, Birmingham, the chief town of Warwickshire, and the adjacent district, the seat of our hardware manufactures, was the very focus of disaffection towards the royal cause. Not only, therefore, would this whole region suffer more from internal and spontaneous agitation, but it would be the more frequently traversed vindictively from without, and harassed by fly-

ing parties from Oxford, or others of the king's garrisons. Thirdly, even apart from the political aspects of Warwickshire, this county happens to be the central one of England, as regards the roads between the north and south; and Birmingham has long been the great central axis,* in which all the radii from the four angles of England proper meet and intersect. Mere accident, therefore, of local position, much more when united with that avowed inveteracy of malignant feeling, which was bitter enough to rouse a reaction of bitterness in the mind of Lord Clarendon, would go far to account for the wreck of many memorials relating to Shakspeare, as well as for the subversion of that quiet and security for humble life, in which the traditional memory finds its best *nidus*. Thus we obtain one solution, and perhaps the main one, of the otherwise mysterious oblivion which had swept away all traces of the mighty poet, by the time when those quiet days revolved upon England, in which again the solitary agent of learned research might roam in security from house to house, gleaning those personal remembrances which, even in the fury of civil strife, might long have lingered by the chimney corner. But the fierce furnace of war had probably, by its *local* ravages, scorched this field of natural tradition, and thinned the gleaner's inheritance by three parts

* In fact, by way of representing to himself the system or scheme of the English roads, the reader has only to imagine one great letter X, or a St Andrew's cross, laid down from north to south, and decussating at Birmingham. Even Coventry, which makes a slight variation for one or two roads, and so far disturbs this decussation, by shifting it eastwards, is still in Warwickshire.

out of four. This, we repeat, may be one part of the solution to this difficult problem.

And if another is still demanded, possibly it may be found in the fact, hostile to the perfect consecration of Shakspeare's memory, that after all he was a player. Many a coarse-minded country gentleman, or village pastor, who would have held his town glorified by the distinction of having sent forth a great judge or an eminent bishop, might disdain to cherish the personal recollections which surrounded one whom custom regarded as little above a mountebank, and the illiberal law as a vagabond. The same degrading appreciation attached both to the actor in plays and to their author. The contemptuous appellation of "play-book," served as readily to degrade the mighty volume which contained Lear and Hamlet, as that of "play-actor," or "player-man," has always served with the illiberal or the fanatical to dishonour the persons of Roscius or of Garrick, of Talma or of Siddons. Nobody, indeed, was better aware of this than the noble-minded Shakspeare; and feelingly he has breathed forth in his sonnets this conscious oppression under which he lay of public opinion, unfavourable by a double title to his own pretensions; for, being both dramatic author and dramatic performer, he found himself heir to a twofold opprobrium, and at an era of English society when the weight of that opprobrium was heaviest. In reality, there was at this period a collision of forces acting in opposite directions upon the estimation of the stage and scenical art, and therefore of all the ministers in its equipage. Puritanism frowned upon these pursuits, as ruinous to public morals; on the other hand, loyalty could not but tolerate what

was patronized by the sovereign; and it happened that Elizabeth, James, and Charles I., were all alike lovers and promoters of theatrical amusements, which were indeed more indispensable to the relief of court ceremony, and the monotony of aulic pomp, than in any other region of life. This royal support, and the consciousness that any brilliant success in these arts implied an unusual share of natural endowments, did something in mitigation of a scorn which must else have been intolerable to all generous natures.

But whatever prejudice might thus operate against the perfect sanctity of Shakspeare's posthumous reputation, it is certain that the splendour of his worldly success must have done much to obliterate that effect; his admirable colloquial talents a good deal, and his gracious affability still more. The wonder therefore will still remain, that Betterton, in less than a century from his death, should have been able to glean so little. And for the solution of this wonder we must throw ourselves chiefly upon the explanations we have made as to the parliamentary war, and the local ravages of its progress in the very district, of the very town, and the very house.

If further arguments are still wanted to explain this mysterious abolition, we may refer the reader to the following succession of disastrous events, by which it should seem that a perfect malice of misfortune pursued the vestiges of the mighty poet's steps. In 1613, the Globe Theatre, with which he had been so long connected, was burned to the ground. Soon afterwards a great fire occurred in Stratford; and next (without counting upon the fire of London, just fifty years after his death, which,

however, would consume many an important record from periods far more remote), the house of Ben Jonson, in which probably, as Mr Campbell suggests, might be parts of his correspondence, was also burned. Finally, there was an old tradition that Lady Barnard, the sole granddaughter of Shakspeare, had carried off many of his papers from Stratford; and these papers have never since been traced.

In many of the elder Lives it has been asserted, that John Shakspeare, the father of the poet, was a butcher, and in others that he was a woolstapler. It is now settled beyond dispute that he was a glover. This was his professed occupation in Stratford, though it is certain that, with this leading trade, from which he took his denomination, he combined some collateral pursuits; and it is possible enough that, as openings offered, he may have meddled with many. In that age, and in a provincial town, nothing like the exquisite subdivision of labour was attempted which we now see realized in the great cities of Christendom. And one trade is often found to play into another with so much reciprocal advantage, that even in our own days we do not much wonder at an enterprising man, in country places, who combines several in his own person. Accordingly, John Shakspeare is known to have united with his town calling the rural and miscellaneous occupations of a farmer.

Meantime his avowed business stood upon a very different footing from the same trade as it is exercised in modern times. Gloves were in that age an article of dress more costly by much, and more elaborately decorated, than in our own. They were a customary present from some

cities to the judges of assize, and to other official persons —a custom of ancient standing, and in some places, we believe, still subsisting; and in such cases it is reasonable to suppose that the gloves must originally have been more valuable than the trivial modern article of the same name. So also, perhaps, in their origin, of the gloves given at funerals. In reality, whenever the simplicity of an age makes it difficult to renew the parts of a wardrobe except in capital towns of difficult access, prudence suggests that such wares should be manufactured of more durable materials; and, being so, they become obviously susceptible of more lavish ornament. But it will not follow, from this essential difference in the gloves of Shakspeare's age, that the glover's occupation was more lucrative. Doubtless he sold more costly gloves, and upon each pair had a larger profit; but for that very reason he sold fewer. Two or three gentlemen "of worship" in the neighbourhood might occasionally require a pair of gloves, but it is very doubtful whether any inhabitant of Stratford would ever call for so mere a luxury.

The practical result, at all events, of John Shakspeare's various pursuits does not appear permanently to have met the demands of his establishment; and in his maturer years there are indications still surviving that he was under a cloud of embarrassment. He certainly lost at one time his social position in the town of Stratford; but there is a strong presumption, in *our* construction of the case, that he finally retrieved it; and for this retrieval of a station which he had forfeited by personal misfortunes or neglect, he was altogether indebted to the filial piety of his immortal son.

Meantime the earlier years of the elder Shakspeare wore the aspect of rising prosperity, however unsound might be the basis on which it rested. There can be little doubt that William Shakspeare, from his birth up to his tenth or perhaps his eleventh year, lived in careless plenty, and saw nothing in his father's house but that style of liberal housekeeping which has ever distinguished the upper yeomanry and the rural gentry of England. Probable enough it is that the resources for meeting this liberality were not strictly commensurate with the family income, but were sometimes allowed to entrench, by means of loans or mortgages, upon capital funds. The stress upon the family finances was perhaps at times severe; and that it was borne at all, must be imputed to the large and even splendid portion which John Shakspeare received with his wife.

This lady, for such she really was in an eminent sense, by birth as well as by connections, bore the beautiful name of Mary Arden, a name derived from the ancient forest district* of the county; and doubtless she merits a more elaborate notice than our slender materials will furnish. To have been *the mother of Shakspeare*,—how august a title to the reverence of infinite generations, and of centuries beyond the vision of prophecy. A plausible hypothesis has been started in modern times, that the facial structure, and that the intellectual conformation,

* And probably so called by some remote ancestor who had emigrated from the forest of Ardennes, in the Netherlands, and *now* for ever memorable to English ears from its proximity to Waterloo.

may be deduced more frequently from the corresponding characteristics in the mother than in the father. It is certain that no very great man has ever existed, but that his greatness has been rehearsed and predicted in one or other of his parents. And it cannot be denied, that in the most eminent men, where we have had the means of pursuing the investigation, the mother has more frequently been repeated and reproduced than the father. We have known cases where the mother has furnished all the intellect, and the father all the moral sensibility; upon which assumption, the wonder ceases that Cicero, Lord Chesterfield, and other brilliant men, who took the utmost pains with their sons, should have failed so conspicuously; for possibly the mothers had been women of excessive and even exemplary stupidity. In the case of Shakspeare, each parent, if we had any means of recovering their characteristics, could not fail to furnish a study of the most profound interest; and with regard to his mother in particular, if the modern hypothesis be true, and if we are indeed to deduce from *her* the stupendous intellect of her son, in that case she must have been a benefactress to her husband's family beyond the promises of fairyland or the dreams of romance; for it is certain that to her chiefly this family was also indebted for their worldly comfort.

Mary Arden was the youngest daughter and the heiress of Robert Arden of Wilmecote, Esq., in the county of Warwick. The family of Arden was even then of great antiquity. About one century and a quarter before the birth of William Shakspeare, a person bearing the same name as his maternal grandfather had been returned by

the commissioners in their list of the Warwickshire gentry; he was there styled Robert Arden, Esq. of Bromich. This was in 1433, or the 12th year of Henry VI. In Henry VII.'s reign, the Ardens received a grant of lands from the crown; and in 1568, four years after the birth of William Shakspeare, Edward Arden, of the same family, was sheriff of the county. Mary Arden was therefore a young lady of excellent descent and connections, and an heiress of considerable wealth. She brought to her husband, as a marriage portion, the landed estate of Asbies, which, upon any just valuation, must be considered as a handsome dowry for a woman of her station. As this point has been contested, and as it goes a great way towards determining the exact social position of the poet's parents, let us be excused for sifting it a little more narrowly than might else seem warranted by the proportions of our present life. Every question which it can be reasonable to raise at all, it must be reasonable to treat with at least so much of minute research as may justify the conclusions which it is made to support.

The estate of Asbies contained fifty acres of arable land, six of meadow, and a right of commonage. What may we assume to have been the value of its fee-simple? Malone, who allows the total fortune of Mary Arden to have been L.110, 13s. 4d., is sure that the value of Asbies could not have been more than one hundred pounds. But why? Because, says he, the "average" rent of land at that time was no more than three shillings per acre. This we deny; but upon that assumption, the total yearly rent of fifty-six acres would be exactly eight

guineas.* And therefore, in assigning the value of Asbies at one hundred pounds, it appears that Malone must have estimated the land at no more than twelve years' purchase, which would carry the value to L.100, 16s. "Even at this estimate," as the latest annotator† on this subject *justly* observes, "Mary Arden's portion was a larger one than was usually given to a landed gentleman's daughter." But this writer objects to Malone's principle of valuation. "We find," says he, "that John Shakspeare also farmed the meadow of Tugton, containing sixteen acres, at the rate of eleven shillings per acre. Now, what proof has Mr Malone adduced that the acres of Asbies were not as valuable as those of Tugton? And if they were so, the former estate must have been worth between three and

* Let not the reader impute to us the gross anachronism of making an estimate for Shakspeare's days in a coin which did not exist until a century, within a couple of years, after Shakspeare's birth, and did not settle to the value of twenty-one shillings until a century after his death. The nerve of such an anachronism would lie in putting the estimate into a mouth of that age. And this is precisely the blunder into which the foolish forger of Vortigern, &c., has fallen. He does not indeed directly mention guineas; but indirectly and virtually he does, by repeatedly giving us accounts imputed to Shakspearian contemporaries, in which the sum-total amounts to L.5, 5s.; or to L.26, 5s.; or, again, to L.17, 17s. 6d. A man is careful to subscribe L.14, 14s., and so forth. But how could such amounts have arisen unless under a secret reference to guineas, which were not in existence until Charles II.'s reign; and, moreover, to guineas at their final settlement by law into twenty-one shillings each, which did not take place until George I.'s reign.

† Thomas Campbell the poet, in his eloquent Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakspeare, prefixed to a popular edition of the poet's dramatic works. London, 1838.

four hundred pounds." In the main drift of his objections we concur with Mr Campbell. But as they are liable to some criticism, let us clear the ground of all plausible cavils, and then see what will be the result. Malone, had he been alive, would probably have answered, that Tugton was a farm specially privileged by nature; and that if any man contended for so unusual a rent as eleven shillings an acre for land not known to him, the *onus probandi* would lie upon *him*. Be it so; eleven shillings is certainly above the ordinary level of rent, but three shillings is below it. We contend, that for tolerably good land, situated advantageously, that is, with a ready access to good markets and good fairs, such as those of Coventry, Birmingham, Gloucester, Worcester, Shrewsbury, &c., one noble might be assumed as the annual rent; and that in such situations twenty years' purchase was not a valuation, even in Elizabeth's reign, very unusual. Let us, however, assume the rent at only five shillings, and land at sixteen years' purchase: upon this basis, the rent would be L.14, and the value of the fee-simple L.224. Now, if it were required to equate that sum with its present value, a very operose* calculation might be requisite. But contenting ourselves with the gross method of making such equations between 1560 and the current century, that is, multiplying by five, we shall find the capital value of the estate to be eleven hundred and twenty pounds, whilst the annual rent would be exactly seventy. But if the estate had been sold, and the purchase-money lent upon mortgage (the only safe

* See Note, p. 315.

mode of investing money at that time), the annual interest would have reached L.28, equal to L.140 of modern money; for mortgages in Elizabeth's age readily produced ten per cent.

A woman who should bring at this day an annual income of L.140 to a provincial tradesman, living in a sort of *rus in urbe*, according to the simple fashions of rustic life, would assuredly be considered as an excellent match. And there can be little doubt that Mary Arden's dowry it was which, for some ten or a dozen years succeeding to his marriage, raised her husband to so much social consideration in Stratford. In 1550 John Shakspeare is supposed to have first settled in Stratford, having migrated from some other part of Warwickshire. In 1557 he married Mary Arden; in 1565, the year subsequent to the birth of his son William, his third child, he was elected one of the aldermen; and in the year 1568 he became first magistrate of the town, by the title of high bailiff. This year we may assume to have been that in which the prosperity of this family reached its zenith; for in this year it was, over and above the presumptions furnished by his civic honours, that he obtained a grant of arms from Clarencieux of the Heralds' College. On this occasion he declared himself worth five hundred pounds derived from his ancestors. And we really cannot understand the right by which critics, living nearly three centuries from his time, undertake to know his affairs better than himself, and to tax him with either inaccuracy or falsehood. No man would be at leisure to court heraldic honours when he knew himself to be embarrassed, or apprehended that he soon might be so. A

man whose anxieties had been fixed at all upon his daily livelihood would, by this chase after the aerial honours of heraldry, have made himself a butt for ridicule such as no fortitude could enable him to sustain.

In 1568, therefore, when his son William would be moving through his fifth year, John Shakspeare (now honoured by the designation of *Master*) would be found at times in the society of the neighbouring gentry. Ten years in advance of this period he was already in difficulties. But there is no proof that these difficulties had then reached a point of degradation, or of memorable distress. The sole positive indications of his decaying condition are, that in 1578 he received an exemption from the small weekly assessment levied upon the aldermen of Stratford for the relief of the poor; and that in the following year, 1579, he is found enrolled amongst the defaulters in the payment of taxes. The latter fact undoubtedly goes to prove that, like every man who is falling back in the world, he was occasionally in arrears. Paying taxes is not like the honours awarded or the processions regulated by Clarencieux: no man is ambitious of precedency there; and if a laggard pace in that duty is to be received as evidence of pauperism, nine-tenths of the English people might occasionally be classed as paupers. With respect to his liberation from the weekly assessment, that may bear a construction different from the one which it has received. This payment, which could never have been regarded as a burthen, not amounting to five pounds annually of our present money, may have been held up as an exponent of wealth and consideration; and John Shakspeare may have been required

to resign it as an honourable distinction, not suitable to the circumstances of an embarrassed man. Finally, the fact of his being indebted to Robert Sadler, a baker, in the sum of five pounds, and his being under the necessity of bringing a friend as security for the payment, proves nothing at all. There is not a town in Europe in which opulent men cannot be found that are backward in the payment of their debts. And the probability is, that Master Sadler acted like most people who, when they suppose a man to be going down in the world, feel their respect for him sensibly decaying, and think it wise to trample him under foot, provided only in that act of trampling they can squeeze out of him their own individual debt. Like that terrific chorus in Spohr's oratorio of St Paul, "*Stone him to death*" is the cry of the selfish and the illiberal amongst creditors, alike towards the just and the unjust amongst debtors.

It was the wise and beautiful prayer of Agar, "Give me neither poverty nor riches;" and, doubtless, for quiet, for peace, and the *latentis semita vitæ*, that is the happiest dispensation. But, perhaps, with a view to a school of discipline and of moral fortitude, it might be a more salutary prayer, "Give me riches *and* poverty, and afterwards neither." For the transitional state between riches and poverty will teach a lesson both as to the baseness and the goodness of human nature, and will impress that lesson with a searching force, such as no borrowed experience ever can approach. Most probable it is that Shakspeare drew some of his powerful scenes in the Timon of Athens, those which exhibit the vileness of ingratitude and the impassioned frenzy of misanthropy,

from his personal recollections connected with the case of his own father. Possibly, though a cloud of 270 years now veils it, this very Master Sadler, who was so urgent for his five pounds, and who so little apprehended that he should be called over the coals for it in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," may have sate for the portrait of that Lucullus who says of Timon—

> Alas, good lord! a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I have dined with him, and told him on't; and come again to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less: and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his; I have told him on't, but I could never get him from it.

For certain years, perhaps, John Shakspeare moved on in darkness and sorrow—

> His familiars from his buried fortunes
> Slunk all away; left their false vows with him,
> Like empty purses pick'd: and his poor self,
> A dedicated beggar to the air,
> With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
> Walk'd, like contempt, alone.

We, however, at this day are chiefly interested in the case as it bears upon the education and youthful happiness of the poet. Now if we suppose that from 1568, the high noon of the family prosperity, to 1578, the first year of their mature embarrassments, one half the interval was passed in stationary sunshine, and the latter half in the gradual twilight of declension, it will follow that the young William had completed his tenth year before he heard the first signals of distress; and for so long a period his education would probably be conducted on as liberal

a scale as the resources of Stratford would allow. Through this earliest section of his life he would undoubtedly rank as a gentleman's son, possibly as the leader of his class in Stratford. But what rank he held through the next ten years, or, more generally, what was the standing in society of Shakspeare until he had created a new station for himself by his own exertions in the metropolis, is a question yet unsettled, but which has been debated as keenly as if it had some great dependencies. Upon this we shall observe, that could we by possibility be called to settle beforehand what rank were best for favouring the development of intellectual powers, the question might wear a face of deep practical importance; but when the question is simply as to a matter of fact, what *was* the rank held by a man whose intellectual development has long ago been completed, this becomes a mere question of curiosity. The tree has fallen; it is confessedly the noblest of all the forest; and we must therefore conclude that the soil in which it flourished was either the best possible, or, if not so, that anything bad in its properties had been disarmed and neutralized by the vital forces of the plant, or by the benignity of nature. If any future Shakspeare were likely to arise, it might be a problem of great interest to agitate, whether the condition of a poor man or of a gentleman were best fitted to nurse and stimulate his faculties. But for the actual Shakspeare, since what he was he was, and since nothing greater can be imagined, it is now become a matter of little moment whether his course lay for fifteen or twenty years through the humilities of absolute poverty, or through the chequered paths of gentry lying in the shade. Whatever

was, must, in this case at least, have been the best, since it terminated in producing Shakspeare; and thus far we must all be optimists.

Yet still, it will be urged, the curiosity is not illiberal which would seek to ascertain the precise career through which Shakspeare ran. This we readily concede; and we are anxious ourselves to contribute anything in our power to the settlement of a point so obscure. What we have wished to protest against is the spirit of partisanship in which this question has too generally been discussed. For, whilst some, with a foolish affectation of plebeian sympathies, overwhelm us with the insipid commonplaces about birth and ancient descent, as honours containing nothing meritorious, and rush eagerly into an ostentatious exhibition of all the circumstances which favour the notion of a humble station and humble connections; others, with equal forgetfulness of true dignity, plead with the intemperance and partiality of a legal advocate for the pretensions of Shakspeare to the hereditary rank of gentleman. Both parties violate the majesty of the subject. When we are seeking for the sources of the Euphrates or the St Lawrence, we look for no proportions to the mighty volume of waters in that particular summit amongst the chain of mountains which embosoms its earliest fountains, nor are we shocked at the obscurity of these fountains. Pursuing the career of Mahommed, or of any man who has memorably impressed his own mind or agency upon the revolutions of mankind, we feel solicitude about the circumstances which might surround his cradle to be altogether unseasonable and impertinent. Whether he were born in a hovel or a palace, whether he

passed his infancy in squalid poverty, or hedged around by the glittering spears of body-guards, as mere questions of fact may be interesting, but, in the light of either accessories or counter-agencies to the native majesty of the subject, are trivial and below all philosophic valuation. So with regard to the creator of Lear and Hamlet, of Othello and Macbeth; to him from whose golden urns the nations beyond the far Atlantic, the multitude of the isles, and the generations unborn in Australian climes, even to the realms of the rising sun (the ἀνατολαὶ ἡελίοιο), must in every age draw perennial streams of intellectual life, we feel that the little accidents of birth and social condition are so unspeakably below the grandeur of the theme, are so irrelevant and disproportioned to the real interest at issue, so incommensurable with any of its relations, that a biographer of Shakspeare at once denounces himself as below his subject if he can entertain such a question as seriously affecting the glory of the poet. In some legends of saints, we find that they were born with a lambent circle or golden areola about their heads. This angelic coronet shed light alike upon the chambers of a cottage or a palace, upon the gloomy limits of a dungeon or the vast expansion of a cathedral; but the cottage, the palace, the dungeon, the cathedral, were all equally incapable of adding one ray of colour or one pencil of light to the supernatural halo.

Having therefore thus pointedly guarded ourselves from misconstruction, and consenting to entertain the question as one in which we, the worshippers of Shakspeare, have an interest of curiosity, but in which he, the object of our worship, has no interest of glory, we proceed to state

what appears to us the result of the scanty facts surviving when collated with each other.

By his mother's side, Shakspeare was an authentic gentleman. By his father's he would have stood in a more dubious position; but the effect of municipal honours to raise and illustrate an equivocal rank has always been acknowledged under the popular tendencies of our English political system. From the sort of lead, therefore, which John Shakspeare took at one time amongst his fellow-townsmen, and from his rank of first magistrate, we may presume that, about the year 1568, he had placed himself at the head of the Stratford community. Afterwards he continued for some years to descend from this altitude; and the question is, at what point this gradual degradation may be supposed to have settled. Now we shall avow it as our opinion, that the composition of society in Stratford was such that, even had the Shakspeare family maintained their superiority, the main body of their daily associates must still have been found amongst persons below the rank of gentry. The poet must inevitably have mixed chiefly with mechanics and humble tradesmen, for such people composed perhaps the total community. But had there even been a gentry in Stratford, since they would have marked the distinctions of their rank chiefly by greater reserve of manners, it is probable that, after all, Shakspeare, with his enormity of delight in exhibitions of human nature, would have mostly cultivated that class of society in which the feelings are more elementary and simple, in which the thoughts speak a plainer language, and in which the restraints of factitious or conventional decorum are exchanged

for the restraints of mere sexual decency. It is a noticeable fact to all who have looked upon human life with an eye of strict attention, that the abstract image of womanhood, in its loveliness, its delicacy, and its modesty, nowhere makes itself more impressive or more advantageously felt than in the humblest cottages, because it is there brought into immediate juxtaposition with the grossness of manners and the careless license of language incident to the fathers and brothers of the house. And this is more especially true in a nation of unaffected sexual gallantry,* such as the English and the Gothic races in general; since, under the immunity which their women enjoy from all servile labours of a coarse or out-of-doors order, by as much lower as they descend in the scale of rank, by so much more do they benefit under the force of contrast with the men of their own level. A young man of that class, however noble in appearance, is somewhat degraded in the eyes of women, by the necessity which his indigence imposes of working under a master; but a beautiful young woman, in the very poorest family, unless she enters upon a life of domestic servitude (in which case her labours are light, suited to her sex, and withdrawn from the public eye), so long in fact as she stays under her father's roof, is as perfectly her own mistress and *sui juris* as the daughter of an earl. This personal dignity, brought into stronger relief by the mercenary employments of her male connections, and the feminine gentleness of her voice and manners, exhibited under the same advantages of contrast, oftentimes combine to make

* See Note, p. 316.

a young cottage beauty as fascinating an object as any woman of any station.

Hence we may in part account for the great event of Shakspeare's early manhood—his premature marriage. It has always been known, or at least traditionally received for a fact, that Shakspeare had married whilst yet a boy; and that his wife was unaccountably older than himself. In the very earliest biographical sketch of the poet, compiled by Rowe, from materials collected by Betterton the actor, it was stated (and that statement is now ascertained to have been correct), that he had married Anne Hathaway, "the daughter of a substantial yeoman." Further than this nothing was known. But in September 1836 was published a very remarkable document, which gives the assurance of law to the time and fact of this event, yet still, unless collated with another record, does nothing to lessen the mystery which had previously surrounded its circumstances. This document consists of two parts: the first, and principal, according to the logic of the case, though second according to the arrangement, being a *license* for the marriage of William Shakspeare with Anne Hathaway, under the condition "of *once* asking of the bannes of matrimony," that is, in effect, dispensing with two out of the three customary askings; the second or subordinate part of the document being a *bond* entered into by two sureties, viz., Fulke Sandells and John Rychardson, both described as *agricolæ* or yeomen, and both marksmen (that is, incapable of writing, and therefore subscribing by means of *marks*), for the payment of forty pounds sterling, in the event of Shakspeare, yet a minor, and incapable of binding himself, failing to fulfil the con-

ditions of the license. In the bond, drawn up in Latin, there is no mention of Shakspeare's name; but in the license, which is altogether English, *his* name, of course, stands foremost; and as it may gratify the reader to see the very words and orthography of the original, we here extract the *operative* part of this document, prefacing only, that the license is attached by way of explanation to the bond. "The condition of this obligation is suche, that if herafter there shall not appere any lawfull lett or impediment, by reason of any precontract, &c., but that Willm. Shagspere, one thone ptie" [on the one party], "and Anne Hathwey of Stratford, in the diocess of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize matrimony together; and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wiffe. And, moreover, if the said Willm. Shagspere do not proceed to solemnization of mariadg with the said Anne Hathwey, without the consent of hir frinds;—then the said obligation" [viz., to pay forty pounds] "to be voyd and of none effect, or els to stand & abide in full force and vertue."

What are we to think of this document? Trepidation and anxiety are written upon its face. The parties are not to be married by a special license; not even by an ordinary license;. in that case no proclamation of banns, no public asking at all, would have been requisite. Economical scruples are consulted; and yet the regular movement of the marriage "through the bell-ropes"* is dis-

* Amongst people of humble rank in England, who only were ever asked in church, until the new-fangled systems of marriage came up within the last ten or fifteen years, during the currency of the three Sundays on which the banns were proclaimed by the

turbed. Economy, which retards the marriage, is here evidently in collision with some opposite principle which precipitates it. How is all this to be explained? Much light is afforded by the date when illustrated by another document. The bond bears date on the 28th day of November in the 25th year of our lady the queen; that is, in 1582. Now the baptism of Shakspeare's eldest child, Susanna, is registered on the 26th of May in the year following. Suppose, therefore, that his marriage was solemnized on the 1st day of December: it was barely possible that it could be earlier, considering that the sureties, drinking, perhaps, at Worcester throughout the 28th of November, would require the 29th, in so dreary a season, for their return to Stratford; after which some preparation might be requisite to the bride, since the marriage was *not* celebrated at Stratford. Next suppose the birth of Miss Susanna to have occurred, like her father's, two days before her baptism, viz., on the 24th of May. From December the 1st to May the 24th, both days inclusively, are 175 days; which, divided by seven, gives precisely twenty-five weeks, that is to say, six months short by one week. Oh, fie, Miss Susanna! you came rather before you were wanted.

Mr Campbell's comment upon the affair is, that "*if* this was the case," viz., if the baptism were really solemnized on the 26th of May, "the poet's first child would *appear* to have been born only six months and eleven days after the bond was entered into." And he then

clergyman from the reading-desk, the young couple elect were said jocosely to be "hanging in the bell-ropes;" alluding perhaps to the joyous peal contingent on the final completion of the marriage.

concludes that, on this assumption, "Miss Susanna Shakspeare came into the world a little prematurely." But this is to doubt where there never was any ground for doubting; the baptism was *certainly* on the 26th of May; and, in the next place, the calculation of six months and eleven days is sustained by substituting lunar months for calendar, and then only by supposing the marriage to have been celebrated on the very day of subscribing the bond in Worcester, and the baptism to have been coincident with the birth; of which suppositions the latter is improbable, and the former, considering the situation of Worcester, impossible.

Strange it is, that, whilst all biographers have worked with so much zeal upon the most barren dates or most baseless traditions in the great poet's life, realising in a manner the chimeras of Laputa, and endeavouring "to extract sunbeams from cucumbers," such a story with regard to such an event, no fiction of village scandal, but involved in legal documents, a story so significant and so eloquent to the intelligent, should formerly have been dismissed without notice of any kind, and even now, after the discovery of 1836, with nothing beyond a slight conjectural insinuation. For our parts, we should have been the last amongst the biographers to unearth any forgotten scandal, or, after so vast a lapse of time, and when the grave had shut out all but charitable thoughts, to point any moral censures at a simple case of natural frailty, youthful precipitancy of passion, of all trespasses the most venial, where the final intentions are honourable. But in this case there seems to have been something more in motion than passion or the ardour of youth. "I like

not," says Parson Evans (alluding to Falstaff in masquerade), "I like not when a woman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler." Neither do we like the spectacle of a mature young woman, five years past her majority, wearing the semblance of having been led astray by a boy who had still two years and a half to run of his minority. Shakspeare himself, looking back on this part of his youthful history from his maturest years, breathes forth pathetic counsels against the errors into which his own inexperience had been ensnared. The disparity of years between himself and his wife he notices in a beautiful scene of the Twelfth Night. The Duke Orsino, observing the sensibility which the pretended Cesario had betrayed on hearing some touching old snatches of a love strain, swears that his beardless page must have felt the passion of love, which the other admits. Upon this the dialogue proceeds thus :—

Duke. What kind of woman is't?
Viola. Of your complexion.
Duke. She is not worth thee then:—What years?
Viola. I' faith,
About your years, my lord.
Duke. Too old, by heaven. *Let still the woman take*
An elder than herself: so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are.
Viola. I think it well, my lord.
Duke. Then *let thy love be younger than thyself,*
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;
For women are as roses, whose fair flower,
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour.

These counsels were uttered nearly twenty years after the event in his own life to which they probably look back; for this play is supposed to have been written in Shakspeare's thirty-eighth year. And we may read an earnestness in pressing the point as to the *inverted* disparity of years, which indicates pretty clearly an appeal to the lessons of his personal experience. But his other indiscretion, in having yielded so far to passion and opportunity as to crop by prelibation, and before they were hallowed, those flowers of paradise which belonged to his marriage-day; this he adverts to with even more solemnity of sorrow, and with more pointed energy of moral reproof, in the very last drama which is supposed to have proceeded from his pen, and therefore with the force and sanctity of testamentary counsel. The Tempest is all but ascertained to have been composed in 1611, that is, about five years before the poet's death; and indeed could not have been composed much earlier; for the very incident which suggested the basis of the plot, and of the local scene, viz., the shipwreck of Sir George Somers on the Bermudas (which were in consequence denominated the Somers' Islands), did not occur until the year 1609. In the opening of the fourth act, Prospero formally betrothes his daughter to Ferdinand; and in doing so he pays the prince a well-merited compliment of having "worthily purchas'd" this rich jewel, by the patience with which, for her sake, he had supported harsh usage, and other painful circumstances of his trial. But, he adds solemnly,

> If thou dost break her virgin knot before
> All sanctimonious ceremonies may
> With full and holy rite be minister'd;

in that case what would follow?

> No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall,
> To make this contract grow; *but barren hate,*
> *Sour-ey'd disdain and discord shall bestrew*
> *The union of your bed with weeds so loathly*
> *That you shall hate it both.* Therefore take heed,
> As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

The young prince assures him in reply, that no strength of opportunity, concurring with the uttermost temptation, not

> the murkiest den
> The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
> Our worser genius can———

should ever prevail to lay asleep his jealousy of self-control, so as to take any advantage of Miranda's innocence. And he adds an argument for this abstinence, by way of reminding Prospero, that not honour only, but even prudential care of his own happiness, is interested in the observance of his promise. Any unhallowed anticipation would, as he insinuates,

> Take away
> The edge of that day's celebration,
> When I shall think, or Phœbus' steeds are founder'd,
> Or night kept chain'd below;

that is, when even the winged hours would seem to move too slowly. Even thus Prospero is not quite satisfied: during his subsequent dialogue with Ariel, we are to suppose that Ferdinand, in conversing apart with Miranda, betrays more impassioned ardour than the wise magician altogether approves. The prince's caresses

have not been unobserved; and thus Prospero renews his warning:

> Look thou be true: do not give dalliance
> Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw
> To the fire i' the blood: be more abstemious,
> Or else—good night your vow.

The royal lover re-assures him of his loyalty to his engagements; and again the wise father, so honourably jealous for his daughter, professes himself satisfied with the prince's pledges.

Now in all these emphatic warnings, uttering the language "of that sad wisdom folly leaves behind," who can avoid reading, as in subtile hieroglyphics, the secret record of Shakspeare's own nuptial disappointments? We, indeed, that is, universal posterity through every age, have reason to rejoice in these disappointments; for to them, past all doubt, we are indebted for Shakspeare's subsequent migration to London, and his public occupation, which, giving him a deep pecuniary interest in the productions of his pen, such as no other literary application of his powers could have approached in that day, were eventually the means of drawing forth those divine works which have survived their author for our everlasting benefit.

Our own reading and deciphering of the whole case is as follows. The Shakspeares were a handsome family, both father and sons. This we assume upon the following grounds:—First, on the presumption arising out of John Shakspeare's having won the favour of a young heiress higher in rank than himself; secondly, on the presumption involved in the fact of three amongst his

four sons having gone upon the stage, to which the most obvious (and perhaps in those days a *sine qua non*) recommendation would be a good person and a pleasing countenance; thirdly, on the direct evidence of Aubrey, who assures us that William Shakspeare was a handsome and a well-shaped man; fourthly, on the implicit evidence of the Stratford monument, which exhibits a man of good figure and noble countenance; fifthly, on the confirmation of this evidence by the Chandos portrait, which exhibits noble features, illustrated by the utmost sweetness of expression; sixthly, on the selection of theatrical parts, which it is known that Shakspeare personated, most of them being such as required some dignity of form, viz., kings, the athletic (though aged) follower of an athletic young man, and supernatural beings. On these grounds, direct or circumstantial, we believe ourselves warranted in assuming that William Shakspeare was a handsome and even noble-looking boy. Miss Anne Hathaway had herself probably some personal attractions; and, if an indigent girl, who looked for no pecuniary advantages, would probably have been early sought in marriage. But as the daughter of "a substantial yeoman," who would expect some fortune in his daughter's suitors, she had, to speak coarsely, a little outlived her market. Time she had none to lose. William Shakspeare pleased her eye; and the gentleness of his nature made him an apt subject for female blandishments, possibly for female arts. Without imputing, however, to this Anne Hathaway anything so hateful as a settled plot for ensnaring him, it was easy enough for a mature woman, armed with such inevitable advantages of experience and of self-possession,

to draw onward a blushing novice; and, without directly creating opportunities, to place him in the way of turning to account such as naturally offered. Young boys are generally flattered by the condescending notice of grown-up women; and perhaps Shakspeare's own lines upon a similar situation, to a young boy adorned with the same natural gifts as himself, may give us the key to the result:—

> Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
> Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd;
> And, when a woman woos, what woman's son
> Will sourly leave her till he have prevail'd?

Once, indeed, entangled in such a pursuit, any person of manly feelings would be sensible that he had no retreat; *that* would be—to insult a woman, grievously to wound her sexual pride, and to insure her lasting scorn and hatred. These were consequences which the gentle-minded Shakspeare could not face; he pursued his good fortunes, half perhaps in heedlessness, half in desperation, until he was roused by the clamorous displeasure of her family upon first discovering the situation of their kinswoman. For such a situation there could be but one atonement, and that was hurried forward by both parties; whilst, out of delicacy towards the bride, the wedding was not celebrated in Stratford (where the register contains no notice of such an event); nor, as Malone imagined, in Weston-upon-Avon, that being in the diocese of Gloucester; but in some parish, as yet undiscovered, in the diocese of Worcester.

But now arose a serious question as to the future maintenance of the young people. John Shakspeare was de-

pressed in his circumstances, and he had other children besides William, viz., three sons and a daughter. The elder Lives have represented him as burdened with ten; but this was an error, arising out of the confusion between John Shakspeare the glover and John Shakspeare a shoemaker. This error has been thus far of use, that, by exposing the fact of two John Shakspeares (not kinsmen) residing in Stratford-upon-Avon, it has satisfactorily proved the name to be amongst those which are locally indigenous to Warwickshire. Meantime it is now ascertained that John Shakspeare the glover had only eight children, viz., four daughters and four sons. The order of their succession was this:—Joan, Margaret, WILLIAM, Gilbert, a second Joan, Anne, Richard, and Edmund. Three of the daughters, viz., the two eldest of the family, Joan and Margaret, together with Anne, died in childhood: all the rest attained mature ages, and of these William was the eldest. This might give him some advantage in his father's regard; but in a question of pecuniary provision precedency amongst the children of an insolvent is nearly nominal. For the present John Shakspeare could do little for his son; and, under these circumstances, perhaps the father of Anne Hathaway would come forward to assist the new-married couple. This condition of dependency would furnish matter for painful feelings and irritating words: the youthful husband, whose mind would be expanding as rapidly as the leaves and blossoms of spring-time in polar latitudes, would soon come to appreciate the sort of wiles by which he had been caught. The female mind is quick, and almost gifted with the power of witchcraft, to decipher what is passing in the

thoughts of familiar companions. Silent and forbearing as William Shakspeare might be, Anne, his staid wife, would read his secret reproaches; ill would she dissemble her wrath, and the less so from the consciousness of having deserved them. It is no uncommon case for women to feel anger in connection with one subject, and to express it in connection with another; which other, perhaps (except as a serviceable mask), would have been a matter of indifference to their feelings. Anne would therefore reply to those inevitable reproaches which her own sense must presume to be lurking in her husband's heart, by others equally stinging, on his inability to support his family, and on his obligations to her father's purse. Shakspeare, we may be sure, would be ruminating every hour on the means of his deliverance from so painful a dependency; and at length, after four years' conjugal discord, he would resolve upon that plan of solitary emigration to the metropolis, which, at the same time that it released him from the humiliation of domestic feuds, succeeded so splendidly for his worldly prosperity, and with a train of consequences so vast for all future ages.

Such, we are persuaded, was the real course of Shakspeare's transition from school-boy pursuits to his public career: and upon the known temperament of Shakspeare, his genial disposition to enjoy life without disturbing his enjoyment by fretting anxieties, we build the conclusion, that had his friends furnished him with ampler funds, and had his marriage been well assorted or happy, we—the world of posterity—should have lost the whole benefit and delight which we have since reaped from his matchless faculties. The motives which drove him *from*

Stratford are clear enough; but what motives determined his course *to* London, and especially to the stage, still remains to be explained. Stratford-upon-Avon, lying in the high road from London through Oxford to Birmingham (or more generally to the north), had been continually visited by some of the best comedians during Shakspeare's childhood. One or two of the most respectable metropolitan actors were natives of Stratford. These would be well known to the elder Shakspeare. But, apart from that accident, it is notorious that mere legal necessity and usage would compel all companies of actors, upon coming into any town, to seek, in the first place, from the chief magistrate, a license for opening a theatre, and next, over and above this public sanction, to seek his personal favour and patronage. As an alderman, therefore, but still more whilst clothed with the official powers of chief magistrate, the poet's father would have opportunities of doing essential services to many persons connected with the London stage. The conversation of comedians acquainted with books, fresh from the keen and sparkling circles of the metropolis, and filled with racy anecdotes of the court, as well as of public life generally, could not but have been fascinating by comparison with the stagnant society of Stratford. Hospitalities on a liberal scale would be offered to these men: not impossibly this fact might be one principal key to those dilapidations which the family estate had suffered. These actors, on *their* part, would retain a grateful sense of the kindness they had received, and would seek to repay it to John Shakspeare, now that he was depressed in his fortunes, as opportunities might offer. His eldest son,

growing up a handsome young man, and beyond all doubt from his earliest days of most splendid colloquial powers (for assuredly of *him* it may be taken for granted,

Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre),

would be often reproached in a friendly way for burying himself in a country life. These overtures, prompted alike by gratitude to the father, and a real selfish interest in the talents of the son, would at length take a definite shape; and, upon some clear understanding as to the terms of such an arrangement, William Shakspeare would at length (about 1586, according to the received account, that is, in the fifth year of his married life, and the twenty-third or twenty-fourth of his age), unaccompanied by wife or children, translate himself to London. Later than 1586 it could not well be; for already in 1589 it has been recently ascertained that he held a share in the property of a leading theatre.

We must here stop to notice, and the reader will allow us to notice with summary indignation, the slanderous and idle tale which represents Shakspeare as having fled to London in the character of a criminal, from the persecutions of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot. This tale has long been propagated under two separate impulses: chiefly, perhaps, under the vulgar love of pointed and glaring contrasts; the splendour of the man was in this instance brought into a sort of epigrammatic antithesis with the humility of his fortunes; secondly, under a baser impulse, the malicious pleasure of seeing a great man degraded. Accordingly, as in the case of Milton,*

* See Note, p. 317.

it has been affirmed that Shakspeare had suffered corporal chastisement; in fact (we abhor to utter such words), that he had been judicially whipped. Now, first of all, let us mark the inconsistency of this tale: the poet was whipped, that is, he was punished most disproportionately, and yet he fled to avoid punishment. Next, we are informed that his offence was deer-stealing, and from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy. And it has been well ascertained that Sir Thomas had no deer, and had no park. Moreover, deer-stealing was regarded by our ancestors exactly as poaching is regarded by us. Deer ran wild in all the great forests; and no offence was looked upon as so venial, none so compatible with a noble Robin-Hood style of character, as this very trespass upon what were regarded as *ferœ naturæ*, and not at all as domestic property. But had it been otherwise, a trespass was not punishable with whipping; nor had Sir Thomas Lucy the power to irritate a whole community like Stratford-upon-Avon, by branding with permanent disgrace a young man so closely connected with three at least of the best families in the neighbourhood. Besides, had Shakspeare suffered any dishonour of that kind, the scandal would infallibly have pursued him at his very heels to London; and in that case Greene, who has left on record, in a posthumous work of 1592, his malicious feelings towards Shakspeare, could not have failed to notice it. For, be it remembered, that a judicial flagellation contains a twofold ignominy: flagellation is ignominious in its own nature, even though unjustly inflicted, and by a ruffian; secondly, any judicial punishment is ignominious, even though not wearing a shade of personal degradation. Now a judicial flagella-

tion includes both features of dishonour. And is it to be imagined that an enemy, searching with the diligence of malice for matter against Shakspeare, should have failed, six years after the event, to hear of that very memorable disgrace which had exiled him from Stratford, and was the very occasion of his first resorting to London; or that a leading company of players in the metropolis, *one of whom*, and a chief one, *was his own townsman*, should cheerfully adopt into their society, as an honoured partner, a young man yet flagrant from the lash of the executioner or the beadle?

This tale is fabulous, and rotten to its core; yet even this does less dishonour to Skakspeare's memory than the sequel attached to it. A sort of scurrilous rondeau, consisting of nine lines, so loathsome in its brutal stupidity and so vulgar in its expression that we shall not pollute our pages by transcribing it, has been imputed to Shakspeare ever since the days of the credulous Rowe. The total point of this idiot's drivel consists in calling Sir Thomas "an asse;" and well it justifies the poet's own remark,—"Let there be gall enough in thy ink, no matter though thou write with a goose pen." Our own belief is, that these lines were a production of Charles II.'s reign, and applied to a Sir Thomas Lucy, not very far removed, if at all, from the age of him who first picked up the precious filth: the phrase "parliament *member*," we believe to be quite unknown in the colloquial use of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

But, that we may rid ourselves once and for ever of this outrageous calumny upon Shakspeare's memory, we shall pursue the story to its final stage. Even Malone

has been thoughtless enough to accredit this closing chapter, which contains, in fact, such a superfetation of folly as the annals of human dulness do not exceed. Let us recapitulate the points of the story. A baronet, who has no deer and no park, is supposed to persecute a poet for stealing these aerial deer out of this aerial park, both lying in *nephelococcygia*. The poet sleeps upon this wrong for eighteen years; but at length, hearing that his persecutor is dead and buried, he conceives bloody thoughts of revenge. And this revenge he purposes to execute by picking a hole in his dead enemy's coat-of-arms. Is this coat-of-arms, then, Sir Thomas Lucy's? Why, no: Malone admits that it is not. For the poet, suddenly recollecting that this ridicule would settle upon the son of his enemy, selects another coat-of-arms, with which his dead enemy never had any connection, and he spends his thunder and lightning upon this irrelevant object; and, after all, the ridicule itself lies in a Welchman's mispronouncing one single heraldic term—a Welchman who mispronounces all words. The last act of the poet's malice recalls to us a sort of jest-book story of an Irishman, the vulgarity of which the reader will pardon in consideration of its relevancy. The Irishman having lost a pair of silk stockings, mentions to a friend that he has taken steps for recovering them by an advertisement, offering a reward to the finder. His friend objects that the costs of advertising, and the reward, would eat out the full value of the silk stockings. But to this the Irishman replies, with a knowing air, that he is not so green as to have overlooked *that;* and that, to keep down the reward, he had advertised the stockings as

worsted. Not at all less flagrant is the bull ascribed to Shakspeare, when he is made to punish a dead man by personalities meant for his exclusive ear, through his coat-of-arms, but at the same time, with the express purpose of blunting and defeating the edge of his own scurrility, is made to substitute for the real arms some others which had no more relation to the dead enemy than they had to the poet himself. This is the very sublime of folly, beyond which human dotage cannot advance.

It is painful, indeed, and dishonourable to human nature, that whenever men of vulgar habits and of poor education wish to impress us with a feeling of respect for a man's talents, they are sure to cite, by way of evidence, some gross instance of malignity. Power, in their minds, is best illustrated by malice or by the infliction of pain. To this unwelcome fact we have some evidence in the wretched tale which we have just dismissed; and there is another of the same description to be found in all Lives of Shakspeare, which we will expose to the contempt of the reader whilst we are in this field of discussion, that we may not afterwards have to resume so disgusting a subject.

This poet, who was a model of gracious benignity in his manners, and of whom, amidst our general ignorance, thus much is perfectly established, that the term *gentle* was almost as generally and by prescriptive right associated with his name as the affix of *venerable* with Bede, or *judicious* with Hooker, is alleged to have insulted a friend by an imaginary epitaph beginning "*Ten in the Hundred*," and supposing him to be damned, yet without

wit enough (which surely the Stratford bellman could have furnished) for devising any, even fanciful, reason for such a supposition; upon which the comment of some foolish critic is,—"The *sharpness of the satire* is said to have stung the man so much that he never forgave it." We have heard of the sting in the tail atoning for the brainless head; but in this doggerel the tail is surely as stingless as the head is brainless. For, 1*st*, *Ten in the Hundred* could be no reproach in Shakspeare's time, any more than to call a man *Three-and-a-half-per-cent.* in this present year 1838; except, indeed, amongst those foolish persons who built their morality upon the Jewish ceremonial law. Shakspeare himself took ten per cent. 2*dly*, It happens that John Combe, so far from being the object of the poet's scurrility, or viewing the poet as an object of implacable resentment, was a Stratford friend; that one of his family was affectionately remembered in Shakspeare's will by the bequest of his sword; and that John Combe himself recorded his perfect charity with Shakspeare by leaving him a legacy of L.5 sterling. And in this lies the key to the whole story. For, 3*dly*, the four lines were written and printed before Shakspeare was born. The name Combe is a common one; and some stupid fellow, who had seen the name in Shakspeare's will, and happened also to have seen the lines in a collection of epigrams, chose to connect the cases by attributing an identity to the two John Combes, though at war with chronology.

Finally, there is another specimen of doggerel attributed to Shakspeare, which is not equally unworthy of him, because not equally malignant, but otherwise equally

below his intellect, no less than his scholarship; we mean the inscription on his grave-stone. This, as a sort of *siste viator* appeal to future sextons, is worthy of the grave-digger or the parish-clerk, who was probably its author. Or it may have been an antique formula, like the vulgar record of ownership in books—

> Anthony Timothy Dolthead's book,
> God give him grace therein to look.

Thus far the matter is of little importance; and it might have been supposed that malignity itself could hardly have imputed such trash to Shakspeare. But when we find, even in this short compass, scarcely wider than the posy of a ring, room found for traducing the poet's memory, it becomes important to say, that the leading sentiment, the horror expressed at any disturbance offered to his bones, is not one to which Shakspeare could have attached the slightest weight; far less could have outraged the sanctities of place and subject, by affixing to any sentiment whatever (and, according to the fiction of the case, his farewell sentiment) the sanction of a curse.

Filial veneration and piety towards the memory of this great man have led us into a digression that might have been unseasonable in any cause less weighty than one having for its object to deliver his honoured name from a load of the most brutal malignity. Never more, we hope and venture to believe, will any thoughtless biographer impute to Shakspeare the asinine doggerel with which the uncritical blundering of his earliest biographer has caused his name to be dishonoured. We now resume the thread

of our biography. The stream of history is centuries in working itself clear of any calumny with which it has once been polluted.

Most readers will be aware of an old story, according to which Shakspeare gained his livelihood for some time after coming to London, by holding the horses of those who rode to the play. This legend is as idle as any one of those which we have just exposed. No custom ever existed of riding on horseback to the play. Gentlemen, who rode valuable horses, would assuredly not expose them systematically to the injury of standing exposed to cold for two or even four hours; and persons of inferior rank would not ride on horseback in the town. Besides, had such a custom ever existed, stables (or sheds at least) would soon have arisen to meet the public wants; and in some of the dramatic sketches of the day, which noticed every fashion as it arose, this would not have been overlooked. The story is traced originally to Sir William Davenant. Betterton the actor, who professed to have received it from him, passed it onwards to Rowe, he to Pope, Pope to Bishop Newton, the editor of Milton, and Newton to Dr Johnson. This pedigree of the fable, however, adds nothing to its credit, and multiplies the chances of some mistake. Another fable, not much less absurd, represents Shakspeare as having from the very first been borne upon the establishment of the theatre, and so far contradicts the other fable, but originally in the very humble character of *call-boy* or deputy prompter, whose business it was to summon each performer according to his order of coming upon the stage. This story, however, quite as much as the other, is irreconcileable

with the discovery recently made by Mr Collier, that in 1589 Shakspeare was a shareholder in the important property of a principal London theatre. It seems destined that all the undoubted facts of Shakspeare's life should come to us through the channel of legal documents, which are better evidence even than imperial medals; whilst, on the other hand, all the fabulous anecdotes, not having an attorney's seal to them, seem to have been the fictions of the wonder-maker. The plain presumption from the record of Shakspeare's situation in 1589, coupled with the fact that his first arrival in London was possibly not until 1587, but, according to the earliest account, not before 1586, a space of time which leaves but little room for any remarkable changes of situation, seems to be, that, either in requital of services done to the players by the poet's family, or in consideration of money advanced by his father-in-law, or on account of Shakspeare's personal accomplishments as an actor, and as an adapter of dramatic works to the stage; for one of these reasons, or for all of them united, William Shakspeare, about the twenty-third year of his age, was adopted into the partnership of a respectable histrionic company, possessing a first-rate theatre in the metropolis. If 1586 were the year in which he came up to London, it seems probable enough that his immediate motive to that step was the increasing distress of his father; for in that year John Shakspeare resigned the office of alderman. There is, however, a bare possibility that Shakspeare might have gone to London about the time when he completed his twenty-first year, that is, in the spring of 1585, but not earlier. Nearly two years after the birth of his eldest daughter Susanna,

his wife lay in for a second and a *last* time; but she then brought her husband twins, a son and a daughter. These children were baptized in February of the year 1585; so that Shakspeare's whole family of three children were born and baptized two months before he completed his majority. The twins were baptized by the names of Hamnet and Judith, those being the names of two amongst their sponsors, viz., Mr Sadler and his wife. Hamnet, which is a remarkable name in itself, becomes still more so from its resemblance to the immortal name of Hamlet* the Dane; it was, however, the real baptismal name of Mr Sadler, a friend of Shakspeare's, about fourteen years older than himself. Shakspeare's son must then have been most interesting to his heart, both as a twin-child and as his only boy. He died in 1596, when he was about eleven years old. Both daughters survived their father; both married; both left issue, and thus gave a chance for continuing the succession from the great poet. But all the four grandchildren died without offspring.

Of Shakspeare personally, at least of Shakspeare the man, as distinguished from the author, there remains little more to record. Already in 1592, Greene, in his posthumous "Groat's-worth of Wit," had expressed the earliest vocation of Shakspeare in the following sentence:

* And singular enough it is, as well as interesting, that Shakspeare had so entirely superseded to his own ear and memory the name Hamnet by the dramatic name of Hamlet, that in writing his will, he actually mis-spells the name of his friend Sadler, and calls him Hamlet. His son, however, who should have familiarized the true name to his ear, had then been dead for twenty years.

—"There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers; in his own conceit the only *Shakscene* in a country!" This alludes to Shakspeare's office of re-casting, and even re-composing, dramatic works, so as to fit them for representation; and Master Greene, it is probable, had suffered in his self-estimation, or in his purse, by the alterations in some piece of his own which the duty of Shakspeare to the general interests of the theatre had obliged him to make.

In 1591 it has been supposed that Shakspeare wrote his first drama, the "Two Gentlemen of Verona;" the least characteristically marked of all his plays, and, with the exception of "Love's Labour's Lost," the least interesting. From this year, 1591 to that of 1611, are just twenty years, within which space lie the whole dramatic creations of Shakspeare, averaging nearly one for every six months. In 1611 was written the "Tempest," which is supposed to have been the last of all Shakspeare's works. Even on that account, as Mr Campbell feelingly observes, it has "a sort of sacredness;" and it is a most remarkable fact, and one calculated to make a man superstitious, that in this play the great enchanter Prospero, in whom, "*as if conscious*," says Mr Campbell, "*that this would be his last work*, the poet has been *inspired to typify himself as* a wise, potent, and *benevolent magician*," of whom, indeed, as of Shakspeare himself, it may be said, that "within that circle" (the circle of his own art) "none durst tread but he," solemnly and for ever renounces his mysterious functions, symbolically breaks his enchanter's wand, and declares that he will bury his books, his science, and his secrets

Deeper than did ever plummet sound.

Nay, it is even ominous, that in this play, and from the voice of Prospero, issues that magnificent prophecy of the total destruction which should one day swallow up

> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea all which it inherit.

And this prophecy is followed immediately by a most profound ejaculation, gathering into one pathetic abstraction the total philosophy of life:

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of; and our little life
> Is rounded by a sleep;

that is, in effect, our life is a little tract of feverish vigils, surrounded and islanded by a shoreless ocean of sleep—sleep before birth, sleep after death.

These remarkable passages were probably not undesigned; but if we suppose them to have been thrown off without conscious notice of their tendencies, then, according to the superstition of the ancient Grecians, they would have been regarded as prefiguring words, prompted by the secret genius that accompanies every man, such as insure along with them their own accomplishment. With or without intention, however, it is believed that Shakspeare wrote nothing more after this exquisite romantic drama. With respect to the remainder of his personal history, Dr Drake and others have supposed, that during the twenty years from 1591 to 1611, he visited Stratford often, and latterly once a-year.

In 1589 he had possessed some share in a theatre; in 1596 he had a considerable share. Through Lord Southampton, as a surviving friend of Lord Essex, who was viewed

as the martyr to his Scottish politics, there can be no doubt that Shakspeare had acquired the favour of James I.; and accordingly, on the 29th of May 1603, about two months after the king's accession to the throne of England, a patent was granted to the company of players who possessed the Globe Theatre; in which patent Shakspeare's name stands second. This patent raised the company to the rank of his majesty's servants, whereas previously they are supposed to have been simply the servants of the Lord Chamberlain. Perhaps it was in grateful acknowledgment of this royal favour that Shakspeare afterwards, in 1606, paid that sublime compliment to the house of Stuart which is involved in the vision shown to Macbeth. This vision is managed with exquisite skill: it was impossible to display the whole series of princes from Macbeth to James I.; but he beholds the posterity of Banquo, one "gold-bound brow" succeeding to another, until he comes to an eighth apparition of a Scottish king,

> Who bears a glass
> Which shows him many more; and some he sees
> Who *twofold* balls and *treble* sceptres carry;

thus bringing down without tedium the long succession to the very person of James I. by the symbolic image of the two crowns united on one head.

About the beginning of the century Shakspeare had become rich enough to purchase the best house in Stratford, called *The Great House*, which name he altered to *New Place;* and in 1602 he bought 107 acres adjacent to this house for a sum (£320) corresponding to about 1500 guineas of modern money. Malone thinks that he purchased the house as early as 1597; and it is certain that

about that time he was able to assist his father in obtaining a renewed grant of arms from the Heralds' College, and therefore, of course, to re-establish his father's fortunes. Ten years of well-directed industry, viz., from 1591 to 1601, and the prosperity of the theatre in which he was a proprietor, had raised him to affluence; and after another ten years, improved with the same success, he was able to retire with an income of L.300, or (according to the customary computations) in modern money of L.1500, per annum. Shakspeare was in fact the first man of letters, Pope the second, and Sir Walter Scott the third, who, in Great Britain, has ever realized a large fortune by literature; or in Christendom, if we except Voltaire, and two dubious cases in Italy. The four or five latter years of his life Shakspeare passed in dignified ease, in profound meditation, we may be sure, and in universal respect, at his native town of Stratford; and there he died, on the 23d of April 1616.*

His daughter Susanna had been married on the 5th of June of the year 1607, to Dr John Hall,† a physician in

* "I have heard that Mr Shakspeare was a natural wit, without any art at all. Hee frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year; and for itt had an allowance so large, that he spent at the rate of 1,000*l.* a-year, as I have heard. Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson, had a merie meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted." (Diary of the Rev. John Ward, A.M., Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, extending from 1648 to 1679, p. 183. Lond. 1839, 8vo.)

† It is naturally to be supposed that Dr Hall would attend the sick-bed of his father-in-law; and the discovery of this gentleman's medical diary promised some gratification to our curiosity,

Stratford. The doctor died in November 1635, aged sixty; his wife, at the age of sixty-six, on July 11, 1640. They had one child, a daughter, named Elizabeth, born in 1608, married April 22, 1626, to Thomas Nashe, Esq., left a widow in 1647, and subsequently re-married to Sir John Barnard; but this Lady Barnard, the sole granddaughter of the poet, had no children by either marriage. The other daughter Judith, on February 10, 1616 (about ten weeks before her father's death) married Mr Thomas Quiney of Stratford, by whom she had three sons, Shakspeare, Richard, and Thomas. Judith was about thirty-one years old at the time of her marriage; and living just forty-six years afterwards, she died in February 1662, at the age of seventy-seven. Her three sons died without issue; and thus, in the direct lineal descent, it is certain that no representative has survived of this transcendent poet, the most august amongst created intellects.

After this review of Shakspeare's life, it becomes our duty to take a summary survey of his works, of his intellectual powers, and of his station in literature,—a station which is now irrevocably settled, not so much (which happens in other cases) by a vast overbalance of favourable suffrages, as by acclamation; not so much by the *voices* of those who admire him up to the verge of idolatry, as by the *acts* of those who everywhere seek for his works among the primal necessities of life, demand them, and crave them as they do their daily bread; not so much by eulogy openly proclaiming itself, as by the silent homage

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as to the cause of Shakspeare's death. Unfortunately, it does not commence until the year 1617.

recorded in the endless multiplication of what he has bequeathed us; not so much by his own compatriots, who, with regard to almost every other author,* compose the total amount of his *effective* audience, as by the unanimous "All hail!" of intellectual Christendom; finally, not by the hasty partisanship of his own generation, nor by the biassed judgment of an age trained in the same modes of feeling and of thinking with himself, but by the solemn award of generation succeeding to generation, of one age correcting the obliquities or peculiarities of another; by the verdict of two hundred and thirty years, which have now elapsed since the very *latest* of his creations, or of two hundred and forty-seven years if we date from the earliest; a verdict which has been continually revived and re-opened, probed, searched, vexed, by criticism in every spirit, from the most genial and intelligent, down to the most malignant and scurrilously hostile which feeble heads and great ignorance could suggest when co-operating with impure hearts and narrow sensibilities; a verdict, in short, sustained and countersigned by a longer series of writers, many of them eminent for wit or learning, than were ever before congregated upon any inquest

* An exception ought perhaps to be made for Sir Walter Scott and for Cervantes; but with regard to all other writers, Dante, suppose, or Ariosto amongst Italians, Camoens amongst those of Portugal, Schiller amongst Germans, however ably they may have been naturalised in foreign languages, as all of those here mentioned (excepting only Ariosto) have in one part of their works been most powerfully naturalised in English, it still remains true (and the very sale of the books is proof sufficient) that an alien author never does take root in the general sympathies out of his own country; he takes his station in libraries, he is read by the

relating to any author, be he who he might, ancient* or modern, Pagan or Christian. It was a most witty saying with respect to a piratical and knavish publisher, who made a trade of insulting the memories of deceased authors by forged writings, that he was "among the new terrors of death." But in the gravest sense it may be affirmed of Shakspeare, that he is among the modern luxuries of life; that life, in fact, is a new thing, and one more to be coveted, since Shakspeare has extended the domains of human consciousness, and pushed its dark frontiers into regions not so much as dimly descried or even suspected before his time, far less illuminated (as now they are) by beauty and tropical luxuriance of life. For instance,—a single instance, indeed one which in itself is a world of new revelation,—the possible beauty of the female character had not been seen as in a dream before Shakspeare called into perfect life the radiant shapes of Desdemona, of Imogene, of Hermione, of Perdita, of Ophelia, of Miranda, and many others. The Una of Spenser, earlier by ten or fifteen years than most of these, was an idealised portrait of female innocence and virgin purity, but too shadowy and unreal for a dramatic reality. And as to the Grecian classics, let not the reader imagine for an instant that any prototype in this field of Shakspearian power can be looked for there. The *Antigone* and the *Electra* of the tragic poets are the two leading female

man of learned leisure, he is known and valued by the refined and the elegant, but he is not (what Shakspeare is for Germany and America) in any proper sense a *popular* favourite.

* It will occur to many readers, that perhaps Homer may furnish the sole exception to this sweeping assertion. See Note, p. 318.

characters that classical antiquity offers to our respect, but assuredly not to our impassioned love, as disciplined and exalted in the school of Shakspeare. They challenge our admiration, severe, and even stern, as impersonations of filial duty, cleaving to the steps of a desolate and afflicted old man; or of sisterly affection, maintaining the rights of a brother under circumstances of peril, of desertion, and consequently of perfect self-reliance. Iphigenia, again, though not dramatically coming before us in her own person, but according to the beautiful report of a spectator, presents us with a fine statuesque model of heroic fortitude, and of one whose young heart, even in the very agonies of her cruel immolation, refused to forget, by a single indecorous gesture, or so much as a moment's neglect of her own princely descent, that she herself was "a lady in the land." These are fine marble groups, but they are not the warm breathing realities of Shakspeare; there is "no speculation" in their cold marble eyes; the breath of life is not in their nostrils; the fine pulses of womanly sensibilities are not throbbing in their bosoms. And besides this immeasurable difference between the cold moony reflexes of life, as exhibited by the power of Grecian art, and the true sunny life of Shakspeare, it must be observed that the Antigones, &c., of the antique put forward but one single trait of character, like the aloe with its single blossom: this solitary feature is presented to us as an abstraction, and as an insulated quality; whereas in Shakspeare all is presented in the *concrete;* that is to say, not brought forward in relief, as by some effort of an anatomical artist; but embodied and imbedded, so to speak, as by the force of a creative nature,

in the complex system of a human life; a life in which all the elements move and play simultaneously, and with something more than mere simultaneity or co-existence, acting and re-acting each upon the other—nay, even acting by each other and through each other. In Shakspeare's characters is felt for ever a real *organic* life, where each is for the whole and in the whole, and where the whole is for each and in each. They only are real incarnations.

The Greek poets could not exhibit any approximations to *female* character, without violating the truth of Grecian life, and shocking the feelings of the audience. The drama with the Greeks, as with us, though much less than with us, was a picture of human life; and that which could not occur in life could not wisely be exhibited on the stage. Now, in ancient Greece, women were secluded from the society of men. The conventual sequestration of the γυναικωνίτις, or female apartment* of the house, and the Mahommedan consecration of its threshold against the ingress of males, had been transplanted from Asia into Greece thousands of years perhaps before either convents or Mahommed existed. Thus barred from all open social intercourse, women could not develop or express any character by word or action. Even to *have* a character, violated, to a Grecian mind, the ideal portrait of feminine excellence; whence, perhaps, partly the too

* Apartment is here used, as the reader will observe, in its true and continental acceptation, as a division or *compartment* of a house including many rooms; a suite of chambers, but a suite which is partitioned off (as in palaces), not a single chamber; a sense so commonly and so erroneously given to this word in England.

generic, too little individualized, style of Grecian beauty. But prominently to *express* a character was impossible under the common tenor of Grecian life, unless when high tragical catastrophes transcended the decorums of that tenor, or for a brief interval raised the curtain which veiled it. Hence the subordinate part which women play upon the Greek stage in all but some half dozen cases. In the paramount tragedy on that stage, the model tragedy, the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, there is virtually no woman at all; for Jocasta is a party to the story merely as the dead Laius or the self-murdered Sphinx was a party,—viz., by her contributions to the fatalities of the event, not by anything she does or says spontaneously. In fact, the Greek poet, if a wise poet, could not address himself genially to a task in which he must begin by shocking the sensibilities of his countrymen. And hence followed, not only the dearth of female characters in the Grecian drama, but also a second result still more favourable to the sense of a new power evolved by Shakspeare. Whenever the common law of Grecian life did give way, it was, as we have observed, to the suspending force of some great convulsion or tragical catastrophe. This for a moment (like an earthquake in a nunnery) would set at liberty even the timid, fluttering Grecian women, those doves of the dove-cot, and would call some of them into action. But which? Precisely those of energetic and masculine minds; the timid and feminine would but shrink the more from public gaze and from tumult. Thus it happened, that such female characters as *were* exhibited in Greece, could not but be the harsh and the severe. If a gentle Ismene appeared for a moment in

contest with some energetic sister Antigone (and chiefly, perhaps, by way of drawing out the fiercer character of that sister), she was soon dismissed as unfit for scenical effect. So that not only were female characters few, but, moreover, of these few the majority were but repetitions of masculine qualities in female persons. Female agency being seldom summoned on the stage except when it had received a sort of special dispensation from its sexual character, by some terrific convulsions of the house or the city, naturally it assumed the style of action suited to these circumstances. And hence it arose, that not woman as she differed from man, but woman as she resembled man—woman, in short, seen under circumstances so dreadful as to abolish the effect of sexual distinction, was the woman of the Greek tragedy.* And hence generally arose for Shakspeare the wider field, and the more astonishing by its perfect novelty, when he first introduced female characters, not as mere varieties or echoes of masculine characters, a Medea or Clytemnestra, or a vindictive Hecuba, the mere tigress of the tragic tiger, but female characters that had the appropriate beauty of female nature; woman no longer grand, terrific, and repulsive, but woman "after her kind"—the other hemisphere of the dramatic world; woman running through the vast gamut of womanly loveliness; woman as emancipated,

* And hence, by parity of reason, under the opposite circumstances, under the circumstances which, instead of abolishing, most emphatically drew forth the sexual distinctions, viz., in the *comic* aspects of social intercourse, the reason that we see no women on the Greek stage; the Greek comedy, unless when it affects the extravagant fun of farce, rejects women.

exalted, ennobled, under a new law of Christian morality; woman the sister and co-equal of man, no longer his slave, his prisoner, and sometimes his rebel. "It is a far cry to Loch Awe;" and from the Athenian stage to the stage of Shakspeare, it may be said, is a prodigious interval. True; but prodigious as it is, there is really nothing between them. The Roman stage, at least the tragic stage, as is well known, was put out, as by an extinguisher, by the cruel amphitheatre, just as a candle is made pale and ridiculous by daylight. Those who were fresh from the real murders of the bloody amphitheatre regarded with contempt the mimic murders of the stage. Stimulation too coarse and too intense had its usual effect in making the sensibilities callous. Christian emperors arose at length, who abolished the amphitheatre in its bloodier features. But by that time the genius of the tragic muse had long slept the sleep of death. And that muse had no resurrection until the age of Shakspeare. So that, notwithstanding a gulf of nineteen centuries and upwards separates Shakspeare from Euripides, the last of the surviving Greek tragedians, the one is still the nearest successor of the other, just as Connaught and the islands in Clew Bay are next neighbours to America, although three thousand watery columns, each of a cubic mile in dimensions, divide them from each other.

A second reason, which lends an emphasis of novelty and effective power to Shakspeare's female world, is a peculiar fact of contrast which exists between that and his corresponding world of men. Let us explain. The purpose and the intention of the Grecian stage was not primarily to develop human *character*, whether in men

or in women; human *fates* were its object; great tragic situations under the mighty control of a vast cloudy destiny, dimly descried at intervals, and brooding over human life by mysterious agencies, and for mysterious ends. Man, no longer the representative of an august *will*,—man, the passion-puppet of fate, could not with any effect display what we call a character, which is a distinction between man and man, emanating originally from the will, and expressing its determinations, moving under the large variety of human impulses. The will is the central pivot of character; and this was obliterated, thwarted, cancelled, by the dark fatalism which brooded over the Grecian stage. That explanation will sufficiently clear up the reason why marked or complex variety of character was slighted by the great principles of the Greek tragedy. And every scholar who has studied that grand drama of Greece with feeling,—that drama, so magnificent, so regal, so stately,—and who has thoughtfully investigated its principles, and its difference from the English drama, will acknowledge that powerful and elaborate character,—character, for instance, that could employ the fiftieth part of that profound analysis which has been applied to Hamlet, to Falstaff, to Lear, to Othello, and applied by Mrs Jamieson so admirably to the full development of the Shakspearian heroines, would have been as much wasted, nay, would have been defeated, and interrupted the blind agencies of fate, just in the same way as it would injure the shadowy grandeur of a ghost to individualize it too much. Milton's angels are slightly touched, superficially touched, with differences of character; but they are such differences, so simple and general,

as are just sufficient to rescue them from the reproach applied to Virgil's "*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthem;*" just sufficient to make them knowable apart. Pliny speaks of painters who painted in one or two colours; and, as respects the angelic characters, Milton does so; he is *monochromatic*. So, and for reasons resting upon the same ultimate philosophy, were the mighty architects of the Greek tragedy. They also were monochromatic; they also, as to the characters of their persons, painted in one colour. And so far there might have been the same novelty in Shakspeare's men as in his women. There *might* have been; but the reason why there is *not*, must be sought in the fact, that History, the muse of History, had there even been no such muse as Melpomene, would have forced us into an acquaintance with human character. History, as the representative of actual life, of real man, gives us powerful delineations of character in its chief agents, that is, in men; and therefore it is that Shakspeare, the absolute creator of female character, was but the mightiest of all painters with regard to male character. Take a single instance. The Antony of Shakspeare, immortal for its execution, is found, after all, as regards the primary conception, in history: Shakspeare's delineation is but the expansion of the germ already pre-existing, by way of scattered fragments, in Cicero's Philippics, in Cicero's Letters, in Appian, &c. But Cleopatra, equally fine, is a pure creation of art: the situation and the scenic circumstances belong to history, but the character belongs to Shakspeare.

In the great world therefore of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of

that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite of man, Shakspeare stands not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth. Woman, therefore, the beauty of the female mind, *this* is one great field of his power. The supernatural world, the world of apparitions, *that* is another: for reasons which it would be easy to give, reasons emanating from the gross mythology of the ancients, no Grecian,* no Roman, could have conceived a ghost. That shadowy conception, the protesting apparition, the awful projection of the human conscience, belongs to the Christian mind: and in all Christendom, who, let us ask, who, but Shakspeare, has found the power for effectually working this mysterious mode of being? In summoning back to earth "the majesty of buried Denmark," how like an awful necromancer does Shakspeare appear! All the pomps and grandeurs which religion, which the grave, which the popular superstition had gathered about the subject of apparitions, are here converted to his purpose, and bend to one awful effect. The wormy grave brought

* It may be thought, however, by some readers, that Æschylus, in his fine phantom of Darius, has approached the English ghost. As a foreign ghost, we would wish (and we are sure that our excellent readers would wish) to show every courtesy and attention to this apparition of Darius. It has the advantage of being royal, an advantage which it shares with the ghost of the royal Dane. Yet how different, how removed by a total world, from that or any of Shakspeare's ghosts! Take that of Banquo, for instance: how shadowy, how unreal, yet how real! Darius is a mere state ghost —a diplomatic ghost. But Banquo—he exists only for Macbeth: the guests do not see him, yet how solemn, how real, how heart-searching he is!

into antagonism with the scenting of the early dawn; the trumpet of resurrection suggested, and again as an antagonist idea to the crowing of the cock (a bird ennobled in the Christian mythus by the part he is made to play at the Crucifixion); its starting "as a guilty thing" placed in opposition to its majestic expression of offended dignity when struck at by the partisans of the sentinels; its awful allusions to the secrets of its prison-house; its ubiquity, contrasted with its local presence; its aerial substance, yet clothed in palpable armour; the heart-shaking solemnity of its language, and the appropriate scenery of its haunt, viz., the ramparts of a capital fortress, with no witnesses but a few gentlemen mounting guard at the dead of night,—what a mist, what a *mirage* of vapour, is here accumulated, through which the dreadful being in the centre looms upon us in far larger proportions than could have happened had it been insulated and left naked of this circumstantial pomp! In the *Tempest*, again, what new modes of life, preternatural, yet far as the poles from the spiritualities of religion. Ariel in antithesis to Caliban! * What is most ethereal to what is most animal! A phantom of air, an abstraction of the dawn and of vesper sun-lights, a bodiless sylph on the one hand; on the other a gross carnal monster, like the Miltonic Asmodai, "the fleshliest incubus" among the fiends, and yet so far ennobled into interest by his intellectual power, and by the grandeur of misanthropy!

* Caliban has not yet been thoroughly fathomed. For all Shakspeare's great creations are like works of nature, subjects of unexhaustible study.—See Note, p. 319.

In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified by Shakspeare's eternal talisman. Oberon and Titania remind us at first glance of Ariel; they approach, but how far they recede: they are like—"like, but oh, how different!" And in no other exhibition of this dreamy population of the moonlight forests and forest-lawns are the circumstantial proprieties of fairy life so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed. The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself, and taken separately from its connection, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords. The witches in Macbeth are another variety of supernatural life, in which Shakspeare's power to enchant and to disenchant are alike portentous. The circumstances of the blasted heath, the army at a distance, the withered attire of the mysterious hags, and the choral litanies of their fiendish Sabbath, are as finely imagined in their kind as those which herald and which surround the ghost in Hamlet. There we see the *positive* of Shakspeare's superior power. But now turn and look to the *negative*. At a time when the trials of witches, the royal book on demonology, and popular superstition (all so far useful, as they prepared a basis of undoubting faith for the poet's serious use of such agencies) had degraded and polluted the ideas of these mysterious beings by many mean associations, Shakspeare does not fear to employ them in high tragedy (a tragedy moreover which, though not the very greatest of his efforts as an intellectual whole, nor as a struggle of passion, is *among* the greatest in any view, and positively *the* greatest for scenical grandeur, and in

that respect makes the nearest approach of all English tragedies to the Grecian model); he does not fear to introduce, for the same appalling effect as that for which Æschylus introduced the Eumenides, a triad of old women, concerning whom an English wit has remarked this grotesque peculiarity in the popular creed of that day,—that although potent over winds and storms, in league with powers of darkness, they yet stood in awe of the constable,—yet relying on his own supreme power to disenchant as well as to enchant, to create and to uncreate, he mixes these women and their dark machineries with the power of armies, with the agencies of kings, and the fortunes of martial kingdoms. Such was the sovereignty of this poet, so mighty its compass!

A third fund of Shakspeare's peculiar power lies in his teeming fertility of fine thoughts and sentiments. From his works alone might be gathered a golden bead-roll of thoughts the deepest, subtlest, most pathetic, and yet most catholic and universally intelligible; the most characteristic, also, and appropriate to the particular person, the situation, and the case, yet, at the same time, applicable to the circumstances of every human being, under all the accidents of life, and all vicissitudes of fortune. But this subject offers so vast a field of observation, it being so eminently the prerogative of Shakspeare to have thought more finely and more extensively than all other poets combined, that we cannot wrong the dignity of such a theme by doing more, in our narrow limits, than simply noticing it as one of the emblazonries upon Shakspeare's shield.

Fourthly, we shall indicate (and, as in the last case,

barely indicate, without attempting in so vast a field to offer any inadequate illustrations) one mode of Shakspeare's dramatic excellence which hitherto has not attracted any special or separate notice. We allude to the forms of life, and natural human passion, as apparent in the structure of his dialogue. Among the many defects and infirmities of the French and of the Italian drama, indeed we may say of the Greek, the dialogue proceeds always by independent speeches, replying indeed to each other, but never modified in its several openings by the momentary effect of its several terminal forms immediately preceding. Now, in Shakspeare, who first set an example of that most important innovation, in all his impassioned dialogues, each reply or rejoinder seems the mere rebound of the previous speech. Every form of natural interruption, breaking through the restraints of ceremony under the impulses of tempestuous passion; every form of hasty interrogative, ardent reiteration when a question has been evaded; every form of scornful repetition of the hostile words; every impatient continuation of the hostile statement; in short, all modes and formulæ by which anger, hurry, fretfulness, scorn, impatience, or excitement under any movement whatever, can disturb or modify or dislocate the formal bookish style of commencement,—these are as rife in Shakspeare's dialogue as in life itself; and how much vivacity, how profound a verisimilitude, they add to the scenic effect as an imitation of human passion and real life, we need not say. A volume might be written illustrating the vast varieties of Shakspeare's art and power in this one field of improvement; another volume might be dedicated to the exposure of the

lifeless and unnatural result from the opposite practice in the foreign stages of France and Italy. And we may truly say, that were Shakspeare distinguished from them by this single feature of nature and propriety, he would on that account alone have merited a great immortality.

[NOTE.—In connection with Shakspeare, an interesting paper of Mr De Quincey's will be found in Volume XIII., "On the knocking at the gate" in Macbeth.]

POPE.

ALEXANDER POPE, the most brilliant of all wits who have at any period applied themselves to the poetic treatment of human manners, to the selecting from the play of human character what is picturesque, or the arresting what is fugitive, was born in the city of London on the 21st* day of May in the memorable year 1688; about six months, therefore, before the landing of the Prince of Orange, and the opening of that great revolution which gave the final ratification to all previous revolutions of that tempestuous century. By the "city" of London the reader is to understand us as speaking with technical accuracy of that district which lies within the ancient walls and the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor. The parents of Pope, there is good reason to think, were of "gentle blood," which is the expression of the poet himself when describing them in verse. His mother was so undoubtedly; and her illustrious son, in speaking of her to Lord Hervey at a time when any exaggeration was open to an easy refutation, and writing in a spirit most likely to provoke it, does not scruple to

* Dr Johnson, however, and Joseph Warton, for reasons not stated, have placed his birth on the 22d. See Note, p. 319.

say, with a tone of dignified haughtiness not unbecoming the situation of a filial champion on behalf of an insulted mother, that by birth and descent she was not below that young lady (one of the two beautiful Miss Lepels) whom his lordship had selected from all the choir of court beauties as the future mother of his children. Of Pope's extraction and immediate lineage for a space of two generations we know enough; beyond that we know little: of this little a part is dubious; and what we are disposed to receive as *not* dubious rests chiefly on his own authority. In the prologue to his Satires, having occasion to notice the lampooners of the times, who had represented his father as "a mechanic, a hatter, a farmer, nay, a bankrupt," he feels himself called upon to state the truth about his parents; and naturally much more so at a time when the low scurrilities of these obscure libellers had been adopted, accredited, and diffused by persons so distinguished in all points of personal accomplishment and rank as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lord Hervey: "*Hard as thy heart,*" was one of the lines in their joint pasquinade, "*Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure.*" Accordingly he makes the following formal statement:— "Mr Pope's father was of a gentleman's family in Oxfordshire, the head of which was the Earl of Downe. His mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esq., of York; she had three brothers, one of whom was killed; another died in the service of King Charles [meaning Charles I.]; the eldest, following his fortunes, and becoming a general officer in Spain, left *her* what estate remained after the sequestrations and forfeitures of her family." The sequestrations here spoken of were those inflicted by

the commissioners for the Parliament; and usually they levied a fifth, or even two-fifths, according to the apparent delinquency of the parties. But in such cases two great differences arose in the treatment of the royalists; first, that the report was coloured according to the interest which a man possessed, or other private means for biassing the commissioners; secondly, that often, when money could not be raised on mortgage to meet the sequestration, it became necessary to sell a family estate suddenly, and therefore in those times at great loss; so that a nominal fifth might be depressed by favour to a tenth, or raised by the necessity of selling to a half. And hence might arise the small dowry of Mrs Pope, notwithstanding the family estate in Yorkshire had centred in her person. But, by the way, we see from the fact of the eldest brother having sought service in Spain, that Mrs Pope was a Papist; not, like her husband, by conversion, but by hereditary faith. This account, as publicly thrown out in the way of challenge by Pope, was, however, sneered at by a certain Mr Pottinger of those days, who, together with his absurd name, has been safely transmitted to posterity in connection with this single feat of having contradicted Alexander Pope. We read in a diary published by the Microscosm, "*Met a large hat with a man under it.*" And so, here, we cannot so properly say that Mr Pottinger brings down the contradiction to our times, as that the contradiction brings down Mr Pottinger. "Cousin Pope," said Pottinger, "had made himself out a fine pedigree, but he wondered where he got it;" and he then goes on to plead in abatement of Pope's pretensions, "that an old maiden aunt, equally related" (that is, stand-

ing in the same relation to himself and to the poet), "a great genealogist, who was always talking of her family, never mentioned this circumstance." And again we are told, from another quarter, that the Earl of Guildford, after express investigation of this matter, "was sure that," amongst the descendants of the Earls of Downe, "there was none of the name of Pope." How it was that Lord Guildford came to have any connection with the affair, is not stated by the biographers of Pope; but we have ascertained that, by marriage with a female descendant from the Earls of Downe, he had come into possession of their English estates.

Finally, though it is rather for the honour of the Earls of Downe than of Pope to make out the connection, we must observe that Lord Guildford's testimony, *if ever given at all*, is simply negative; he had found no proofs of the connection, but he had not found any proofs to destroy it; whilst, on the other hand, it ought to be mentioned, though unaccountably overlooked by all previous biographers, that one of Pope's anonymous enemies, who hated him personally, but was apparently master of his family history, and too honourable to belie his own convictions, expressly affirms, of his own authority, and without reference to any claim put forward by Pope, that he was descended from a junior branch of the Downe family; which testimony has a double value—first, as corroborating the probability of Pope's statement viewed in the light of a fact; and, secondly, as corroborating that same statement viewed in the light of a current story, true or false, and not as a disingenuous fiction put forward by Pope to confute Lord Hervey.

It is probable to us that the Popes, who had been originally transplanted from England to Ireland, had, in the person of some cadet, been re-transplanted to England; and that having in that way been disconnected from all personal recognition, and all local memorials of the capital house, by this sort of *postliminium*, the junior branch had ceased to cherish the honour of a descent which was now divided from all direct advantage. At all events, the researches of Pope's biographers have not been able to trace him farther back in the paternal line than to his grandfather; and he (which is odd enough, considering the Popery of his descendants) was a clergyman of the Established Church, in Hampshire. This grandfather had two sons; of the eldest nothing is recorded beyond the three facts, that he went to Oxford, that he died there, and that he spent the family estate.* The younger son, whose name was Alexander, had been sent when young, in some commercial character, to Lisbon;† and there it was, in that centre of bigotry, that he became a sincere and most disinterested Catholic. He returned to England; married a Catholic young widow; and became the father of a second Alexander Pope, *ultra Sauromatus notus et Antipodes.*

By his own account to Spence, Pope learned "very early to read;" and writing he taught himself "by copying

* It is apparently with allusion to this part of his history, which he would often have heard from the lips of his own father, that Pope glances at his uncle's memory somewhat disrespectfully in his prose letter to Lord Hervey.

† Some accounts, however, say to Flanders, in which case, perhaps, Antwerp or Brussels would have the honour of his conversion.

from printed books;" all which seems to argue that, as an only child, with an indolent father and a most indulgent mother, he was not molested with much schooling in his infancy. Only one adventure is recorded of his childhood,—viz., that he was attacked by a cow, thrown down, and wounded in the throat.

Pope escaped this disagreeable kind of vaccination without serious injury, and was not farther tormented by cows or schoolmasters until he was about eight years old, when the family priest,—that is, we presume, the confessor of his parents,—taught him, agreeably to the Jesuit system, the rudiments of Greek and Latin concurrently. This priest was named Banister; and his name is frequently employed, together with other fictitious names, by way of signature to the notes in the *Dunciad*, an artifice which was adopted for the sake of giving a characteristic variety to the notes, according to the tone required for the illustration of the text. From his tuition Pope was at length dismissed to a Catholic school at Twyford, near Winchester. The selection of a school in this neighbourhood, though certainly the choice of a Catholic family was much limited, points apparently to the old Hampshire connection of his father. Here an incident occurred which most powerfully illustrates the original and constitutional determination to satire of this irritable poet. He knew himself so accurately that, in after times, half by way of boast, half of confession, he says,—

> But touch me, and no Minister so sore:
> Whoe'er offends, at some unlucky time
> Slides into verse, and hitches in a rhyme,
> Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
> And the sad burthen of some merry song.

Already, it seems, in childhood he had the same irresistible instinct, victorious over the strongest sense of personal danger. He wrote a bitter satire upon the presiding pedagogue, was brutally punished for this youthful indiscretion, and indignantly removed by his parents from the school. Mr Roscoe speaks of Pope's personal experience as necessarily unfavourable to public schools; but in reality he knew nothing of public schools. All the establishments for Papists were narrow, and suited to their political depression; and his parents were too sincerely anxious for their son's religious principles to risk the contagion of Protestant association by sending him elsewhere.

From the scene* of his disgrace and illiberal punishment, he passed, according to the received accounts, under the tuition of several other masters in rapid succession. But it is the less necessary to trouble the reader with their names, as Pope himself assures us that he learned nothing from any of them. To Banister he had been indebted for such trivial elements of a schoolboy's learning as he possessed at all, excepting those which he had taught himself. And upon himself it was, and his own admirable faculties, that he was now finally thrown for the rest of his education, at an age so immature that many boys are then first entering their academic career. Pope is supposed to have been scarcely twelve years old when he assumed the office of self-tuition, and bade farewell for ever to schools and tutors.

Such a phenomenon is at any rate striking; it is the

* See Note, p. 323.

more so under the circumstances which attended the plan, and under the results which justified its execution. It seems, as regards the plan, hardly less strange that prudent parents should have acquiesced in a scheme of so much peril to his intellectual interests, than that the son, as regards the execution, should have justified their confidence by his final success. More especially this confidence surprises us in the father. A doating mother might shut her eyes to all remote evils in the present gratification to her affections; but Pope's father was a man of sense and principle; he must have weighed the risks besetting a boy left to his own intellectual guidance; and to these risks he would allow the more weight from his own conscious defect of scholarship and inability to guide or even to accompany his son's studies. He could neither direct the proper choice of studies, nor in any one study taken separately could he suggest the proper choice of books.

The case we apprehend to have been this: Alexander Pope the elder was a man of philosophical desires and unambitious character. Quiet and seclusion and innocence of life,—these were what he affected for himself; and that which had been found available for his own happiness, he might reasonably wish for his son. The two hinges upon which his plans may be supposed to have turned were, first, the political degradation of his sect; and, secondly, the fact that his son was an only child. Had he been a Protestant, or had he, though a Papist, been burdened with a large family of children, he would doubtless have pursued a different course. But to him, and, as he sincerely hoped, to his son, the strife after

civil honours was sternly barred. Apostasy only could lay it open. And, as the sentiments of honour and duty in this point fell in with the vices of his temperament, high principle concurring with his constitutional love of ease, we need not wonder that he should early retire from commerce with a very moderate competence, or that he should suppose the same fortune sufficient for one who was to stand in the same position. This son was from his birth deformed. That made it probable that he might not marry. If he should, and happened to have children, a small family would find an adequate provision in the patrimonial funds; and a large one, at the worst, could only throw him upon the same commercial exertions to which he had been obliged himself. The Roman Catholics, indeed, were just then situated as our modern Quakers are: law to the one, as conscience to the other, closed all modes of active employment except that of commercial industry. Either his son, therefore, would be a rustic recluse, or, like himself, he would be a merchant.

With such prospects, what need of an elaborate education? And where was such an education to be sought? At the petty establishments of the suffering Catholics, the instruction, as he had found experimentally, was poor. At the great national establishments his son would be a degraded person; one who was permanently repelled from every arena of honour, and sometimes, as in cases of public danger, was banished from the capital, deprived of his house, left defenceless against common ruffians, and rendered liable to the control of every village magistrate. To one in these circumstances, solitude was the wisest position; and the best qualification for that was an edu-

cation that would furnish aids to solitary thought. No need for brilliant accomplishments to him who must never display them; forensic arts, pulpit erudition, senatorial eloquence, academical accomplishments,—these would be lost to one against whom the courts, the pulpit, the senate, the universities were closed. Nay, by possibility worse than lost; they might prove so many snares or positive bribes to apostasy. Plain English, therefore, and the high thinking of his compatriot authors, might prove the best provision for the mind of an English Papist destined to seclusion.'

Such are the considerations under which we read and interpret the conduct of Pope's parents; and they lead us to regard as wise and conscientious a scheme which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been pitiably foolish. And be it remembered, that to these considerations, derived exclusively from the civil circumstances of the family, were superadded others derived from the astonishing prematurity of the individual. That boy who could write at twelve years of age the beautiful and touching stanzas on Solitude, might well be trusted with the superintendence of his own studies. And the stripling of sixteen, who could so far transcend in good sense the accomplished statesmen or men of the world with whom he afterwards corresponded, might challenge confidence for such a choice of books as would best promote the development of his own faculties.

In reality, one so finely endowed as Alexander Pope could not easily lose his way in the most extensive or ill-digested library. And though he tells Atterbury that at one time he abused his opportunities by reading contro-

versial divinity, we may be sure that his own native activities, and the elasticity of his mind, would speedily recoil into a just equilibrium of study, under wider and happier opportunities. Reading, indeed, for a person like Pope, is rather valuable as a means of exciting his own energies, and of feeding his own sensibilities, than for any direct acquisitions of knowledge, or for any trains of systematic research. All men are destined to devour much rubbish between the cradle and the grave; and doubtless the man who is wisest in the choice of his books will have read many a page before he dies, that a thoughtful review would pronounce worthless. This is the fate of all men. But the reading of Pope, as a general result or measure of his judicious choice, is best justified in his writings. They show him well furnished with whatsoever he wanted for matter or for embellishment, for argument or illustration, for example and model, or for direct and explicit imitation.

Possibly, as we have already suggested, within the range of English literature Pope might have found all that he wanted. But variety the widest has its uses; and, for the extension of his influence with the polished classes amongst whom he lived, he did wisely to add other languages; and a question has thus arisen with regard to the extent of Pope's attainments as a self-taught linguist. A man, or even a boy, of great originality, may happen to succeed best in working his own native mines of thought, by his unassisted energies; here it is granted that a tutor, a guide, or even a companion, may be dispensed with, and even beneficially. But in the case of foreign languages, in attaining this machinery of literature,

though anomalies even here do arise, and men there are, like Joseph Scaliger, who form their own dictionaries and grammars in the mere process of reading an unknown language, by far the major part of students will lose their time by rejecting the aid of tutors. As there has been much difference of opinion with regard to Pope's skill in languages, we shall briefly collate and bring into one focus the stray notices.

As to the French, Voltaire, who knew Pope personally, declared that he "could hardly *read* it, and spoke not one syllable of the language." But perhaps Voltaire might dislike Pope? On the contrary, he was acquainted with his works, and admired them to the very level of their merits. Speaking of him *after death* to Frederick of Prussia, he prefers him to Horace and Boileau, asserting that, by comparison with *them*,

> Pope *approfondit* ce qu'ils ont *effleuré*.
> D'un esprit plus hardi, d'un pas plus assuré,
> Il porta le flambeau dans l'abîme de l'être;
> Et l'homme *avec lui seul* apprit à se connoître.
> L'art quelquefois frivole, et quelquefois divine,
> L'art des vers est dans Pope utile au genre humain.

This is not a wise account of Pope, for it does not abstract the characteristic feature of his power; but it is a very kind one. And of course Voltaire could not have meant any unkindness in denying his knowledge of French. But he was certainly wrong. Pope, in *his* presence, would decline to speak or to read a language of which the pronunciation was confessedly beyond him. Or, if he did, the impression left would be still worse. In fact, no man ever will pronounce or talk a language

which he does not use, for some part of every day, in the real intercourse of life. But that Pope read French of an ordinary cast with fluency enough, is evident from the extensive use which he made of Madame Dacier's labours on the "Iliad," and still more of La Valterie's prose translation of the "Iliad." Already in the year 1718, and long before his personal knowledge of Voltaire, Pope had shown his accurate acquaintance with some voluminous French authors in a way which, we suspect, was equally surprising and offensive to his noble correspondent. The Duke of Buckingham* had addressed to Pope a letter containing some account of the controversy about Homer which had then been recently carried on in France between La Motte and Madame Dacier. This account was delivered with an air of teaching which was very little in harmony with its excessive shallowness. Pope, who sustained the part of pupil in this interlude, replied in a manner that exhibited a knowledge of the parties concerned in the controversy much superior to that of the Duke. In particular, he characterized the excellent notes upon Horace of M. Dacier the husband in very just terms, as dis-

* That is, Sheffield, and legally speaking, of Buckingham-*shire*. For he would not take the title of Buckingham, under a fear that there was lurking somewhere or other a claim to that title amongst the connections of the Villiers family. He was a pompous grandee, who lived in uneasy splendour, and, as a writer, most extravagantly overrated; accordingly he is now forgotten. Such was his vanity, and his ridiculous mania for allying himself with royalty, that he first of all had the presumption to court the Princess (afterwards Queen) Anne. Being rejected, he then offered himself to the illegitimate daughter of James II. by the daughter of Sir Charles Sedley. She was as ostentatious as himself, and accepted him.

tinguished from those of his conceited and half-learned wife; and the whole reply of Pope seems very much as though he had been playing off a mystification on his Grace. Undoubtedly the pompous duke felt that he had caught a Tartar. Now M. Dacier's "Horace," which, with the text, fills nine volumes, Pope could not have read *except* in French; for they are not even yet translated into English. Besides, Pope read critically the French translation of his own "Essay on Man," "Essay on Criticism," "Rape of the Lock," &c. He spoke of them as a critic; and it was at no time a fault of Pope's to make false pretensions. All readers of Pope's Satires must also recollect numerous proofs that he had read Boileau with so much feeling of his peculiar merit that he has appropriated and naturalized in English some of his best passages. Voltaire was therefore certainly wrong.

Of Italian literature, meantime, Pope knew little or nothing; and simply because he knew nothing of the language. Tasso, indeed, he admired; and, which is singular, more than Ariosto. But we believe that he had read him only in English; and it is certain that he could not take up an Italian author, either in prose or verse, for the unaffected amusement of his leisure.

Greek, we all know, has been denied to Pope, ever since he translated Homer, and chiefly in consequence of that translation. This seems at first sight unfair, because criticism has not succeeded in fixing upon Pope any errors of ignorance. His deviations from Homer were uniformly the result of imperfect sympathy with the naked simplicity of the antique, and therefore wilful deviations, not (like those of his more pretending com-

petitors, Addison and Tickell) pure blunders of misapprehension. But yet it is not inconsistent with this concession to Pope's merits, that we must avow our belief in his thorough ignorance of Greek when he first commenced his task. And to us it seems astonishing that nobody should have adverted to that fact as a sufficient solution, and in fact the only plausible solution, of Pope's excessive depression of spirits in the earliest stage of his labours. This depression, after he had once pledged himself to his subscribers for the fulfilment of his task, arose from, and could have arisen from nothing else, than his conscious ignorance of Greek in connection with the solemn responsibilities he had assumed in the face of a great nation. Nay, even countries as presumptuously disdainful of tramontane literature as Italy took an interest in this memorable undertaking. Bishop Berkeley found Salvini reading it at Florence; and Madame Dacier even, who read little but Greek, and certainly no English until then, condescended to study it. Pope's dejection, therefore, or rather agitation (for it impressed by sympathy a tumultuous character upon his dreams which lasted for years after the cause had ceased to operate) was perfectly natural under the explanation we have given, but not otherwise. And how did he surmount this unhappy self-distrust? Paradoxical as it may sound, we will venture to say that, with the innumerable aids for interpreting Homer which even then existed, a man sufficiently acquainted with Latin might make a translation even critically exact. This Pope was not long in discovering. Other alleviations of his labour concurred, and in a ratio daily increasing.

The same formulæ were continually recurring, such as,

But him answering, thus addressed the swift-footed Achilles;

Or,

But him sternly beholding, thus spoke Agamemnon the king of men.

Then, again, universally the Homeric Greek, from many causes, is easy; and especially from these two: 1*st*, The simplicity of the thought, which never gathers into those perplexed knots of rhetorical condensation which we find in the dramatic poets of a higher civilization; 2*dly*, From the constant bounds set to the expansion of the thought by the form of the metre; an advantage of verse which makes the poets so much easier to a beginner in the German language than the illimitable weavers of prose. The line or the stanza reins up the poet tightly to his theme, and will not suffer him to expatiate. Gradually, therefore, Pope came to read the Homeric Greek, but never accurately; nor did he ever read Eustathius without aid from Latin. As to any knowledge of the Attic Greek, of the Greek of the dramatists, the Greek of Plato, the Greek of Demosthenes, Pope neither had it nor affected to have it. Indeed it was no foible of Pope's, as we will repeat, to make claims which he had not, or even to dwell ostentatiously upon those which he had. And with respect to Greek in particular, there is a manuscript letter in existence from Pope to a Mr Bridges at Falham, which, speaking of the original Homer, distinctly records the knowledge which he had of his own "imperfectness in the language." Chapman, a most spirited translator of Homer, probably had no very critical skill in Greek; and

Hobbes was, beyond all question, as poor a Grecian as he was a doggerel translator; yet in this letter Pope professes his willing submission to the "authority" of Chapman and Hobbes as superior to his own.

Finally, in *Latin* Pope was a "considerable proficient," even by the cautious testimony of Dr Johnson; and in this language only the doctor was an accomplished critic. If Pope had really the proficiency here ascribed to him, he must have had it already in his boyish years; for the translation from Statius, which is the principal monument of his skill, was executed *before* he was fourteen. We have taken the trouble to throw a hasty glance over it; and whilst we readily admit the extraordinary talent which it shows, as do all the juvenile essays of Pope, we cannot allow that it argues any accurate skill in Latin. The word Malĕa, as we have seen noti d by some editor, he makes Malēa; which in itself, as the name was not of common occurrence, would not have been an error worth noticing; but, taken in connection with the certainty that Pope had the original line before him—

Arripit ex templo Maleæ de valle resurgens,

when not merely the scanning theoretically, but the whole rhythmus practically, to the most obtuse ear, would be annihilated by Pope's false quantity, is a blunder which serves to show his utter ignorance of prosody. But, even as a version of the sense, with every allowance for a poet's license of compression and expansion, Pope's translation is defective, and argues an occasional inability to construe the text. For instance, at the council summoned by Jupiter, it is said that he at his first entrance seats

himself upon his starry throne, but not so the inferior gods:

> Nec protinus ausi
> Cœlicolæ, veniam donec pater ipse sedendi
> Tranquilla jubet esse manu.

In which passage there is a slight obscurity, from the ellipsis of the word *sedere*, or *sese locare;* but the meaning is evidently that the other gods did not presume to sit down *protinus*, that is, in immediate succession to Jupiter, and interpreting his example as a tacit license to do so, until, by a gentle wave of his hand, the supreme father signifies his express permission to take their seats. But Pope, manifestly unable to extract any sense from the passage, translates thus:—

> At Jove's assent the deities around,
> In solemn state, the consistory *crown'd;*

where at once the whole picturesque solemnity of the celestial ritual melts into the vaguest generalities. Again, at v. 178, *ruptæque vices* is translated "*and all the ties of nature broke;*" but by *vices* is indicated the alternate reign of the two brothers, as ratified by mutual oaths, and subsequently violated by Eteocles. Other mistakes might be cited, which seem to prove that Pope, like most self-taught linguists, was a very imperfect one.* Pope, in short, never rose to such a point in classical literature as to read either Greek or Latin authors without effort, and for his private amusement.

The result, therefore, of Pope's self-tuition appears to us, considered in the light of an attempt to acquire cer-

* See Note, p. 325.

tain accomplishments of knowledge, a most complete failure. As a linguist, he read no language with ease; none with pleasure to himself; and none with so much accuracy as could have carried him through the most popular author with a general independence on interpreters. But, considered with a view to his particular faculties and slumbering originality of power, which required perhaps the stimulation of accident to arouse them effectually, we are very much disposed to think that the very failure of his education as an artificial training was a great advantage finally for inclining his mind to throw itself, by way of indemnification, upon its native powers. Had he attained, as with better tuition he would have attained, distinguished excellence as a scholar, or as a student of science, the chances are many that he would have settled down into such studies as thousands could pursue not less successfully than he; whilst as it was, the very dissatisfaction which he could not but feel with his slender attainments, must have given him a strong motive for cultivating those impulses of original power which he felt continually stirring within him, and which were vivified into trials of competition as often as any distinguished excellence was introduced to his knowledge.

Pope's father, at the time of his birth, lived in Lombard Street;* a street still familiar to the public eye, from its adjacency to some of the chief metropolitan establishments, and to the English ear possessing a degree

* One writer of that age says, in Cheapside: but probably this difference arose from contemplating Lombard Street as a prolongation of Cheapside.

of historical importance; first, as the residence of those Lombards, or Milanese, who affiliated our infant commerce to the matron splendours of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean; next, as the central resort of those jewellers, or "goldsmiths," as they were styled, who performed all the functions of modern bankers from the period of the parliamentary war to the rise of the Bank of England, that is, for six years after the birth of Pope; and, lastly, as the seat, until lately, of that vast post-office through which, for so long a period, has passed the correspondence of all nations and languages, upon a scale unknown to any other country. In this street Alexander Pope the elder had a house, and a warehouse, we presume, annexed, in which he conducted the wholesale business of a linen merchant. As soon as he had made a moderate fortune he retired from business, first to Kensington, and afterwards to Binfield, in Windsor Forest. The period of this migration is not assigned by any writer. It is probable that a prudent man would not adopt it with any prospect of having more children. But this chance might be considered as already extinguished at the birth of Pope; for though his father had then only attained his forty-fourth year, Mrs Pope had completed her forty-eighth. It is probable, from the interval of seven days which is said to have elapsed between Pope's punishment and his removal from the school, that his parents were then living at such a distance from him as to prevent his ready communication with them, else we may be sure that Mrs Pope would have flown on the wings of love and wrath to the rescue of her darling. Supposing, therefore, as we *do* suppose, that Mr Bromley's school in London was the scene of his

disgrace, it would appear on this argument that his parents were then living in Windsor Forest. And this hypothesis falls in with another anecdote in Pope's life, which we know partly upon his own authority. He tells Wycherley that he had seen Dryden, and barely seen him. *Virgilium vidi tantum.* This is presumed to have been in Will's Coffee-house, whither any person in search of Dryden would of course resort; and it must have been before Pope was twelve years old, for Dryden died in 1700. Now there is a letter of Sir Charles Wogan's, stating that he first took Pope to Will's, and his words are, "from our forest." Consequently, at that period, when he had not completed his twelfth year, Pope was already living in the forest.

From this period, and so long as the genial spirits of youth lasted, Pope's life must have been one dream of pleasure. He tells Lord Hervey that his mother did not spoil him; but that was no doubt because there was no room for wilfulness or waywardness on either side, when all was one placid scene of parental obedience and gentle filial authority. We feel persuaded that, if not in words, in spirit and inclination they would, in any notes they might have occasion to write, subscribe themselves "your dutiful parents." And of what consequence in whose hands were the reins which were never needed? Every reader must be pleased to know that these idolizing parents lived to see their son at the very summit of his public elevation; even his father lived two years and a-half after the publication of his "Homer" had commenced, and when his fortune was made; and his mother lived for nearly eighteen years more. What a felicity for her,

how rare and how perfect, to find that he, who to her maternal eyes was naturally the most perfect of human beings, and the idol of her heart, had already been the idol of the nation before he had completed his youth. She had also another blessing not always commanded by the most devoted love: many sons there are who think it essential to manliness that they should treat their mother's doting anxiety with levity, or even ridicule; but Pope, who was the model of a good son, never swerved in words, manners, or conduct, from the most respectful tenderness, or intermitted the piety of his attentions. And so far did he carry this regard for his mother's comfort, that, well knowing how she lived upon his presence or by his image, he denied himself for many years all excursions which could not be fully accomplished within the revolution of a week. And to this cause, combined with the excessive length of his mother's life, must be ascribed the fact that Pope never went abroad; not to Italy with Thomson or with Berkeley, or any of his diplomatic friends; not to Ireland, where his presence would have been hailed as a national honour; not even to France, on a visit to his admiring and admired friend Lord Bolingbroke. For as to the fear of sea-sickness, *that* did not arise until a late period of his life, and at any period would not have operated to prevent his crossing from Dover to Calais. It is possible that, in his earlier and more sanguine years, all the perfection of his filial love may not have availed to prevent him from now and then breathing a secret murmur at confinement so constant. But it is certain that, long before he passed the meridian of his life, Pope had come to view this confinement with far other thoughts.

Experience had then taught him that to no man is the privilege granted of possessing more than one or two friends who are such in extremity. By that time he had come to view his mother's death with fear and anguish. She, he knew by many a sign, would have been happy to lay down her life for his sake; but for others, even those who were the most friendly and the most constant in their attentions, he felt but too certainly that his death, or his heavy affliction, might cost them a few sighs, but would not materially disturb their peace of mind. "It is but in a very narrow circle," says he, in a confidential letter, "that friendship walks in this world, and I care not to tread out of it more than I needs must; knowing well it is but to two or three (if quite so many) that any man's welfare or memory can be of consequence." After such acknowledgments, we are not surprised to find him writing thus of his mother, and his fearful struggles to fight off the shock of his mother's death, at a time when it was rapidly approaching. After having said of a friend's death, "the subject is beyond writing upon, beyond cure or ease by reason or reflection, beyond all but one thought that it is the will of God," he goes on thus, "So will the death of my mother be, which now I tremble at, now resign to, now bring close to me, now set farther off; every day alters, turns me about, confuses my whole frame of mind." There is no pleasure, he adds, which the world can give, "equivalent to countervail either the death of one I have so long lived with, or of one I have so long lived for." How will he comfort himself after her death? "I have nothing left but to turn my thoughts to one comfort, the last we usually think of, though the only one we should in wisdom depend upon. I

sit in her room, and she is always present before me but when I sleep. I wonder I am so well. I have shed many tears; but now I weep at nothing."

A man, therefore, happier than Pope in his domestic relations cannot easily have lived. It is true these relations were circumscribed; had they been wider they could not have been so happy. But Pope was equally fortunate in his social relations. What, indeed, most of all surprises us is the courteous, flattering, and even brilliant reception which Pope found from his earliest boyhood amongst the most accomplished men of the world. Wits, courtiers, statesmen, grandees the most dignified, and men of fashion the most brilliant, all alike treated him not only with pointed kindness, but with a respect that seemed to acknowledge him as their intellectual superior. Without rank, high birth, fortune, without even a literary name, and in defiance of a deformed person, Pope, whilst yet only sixteen years of age, was caressed, and even honoured; and all this with no one recommendation but simply the knowledge of his dedication to letters, and the premature expectations which he raised of future excellence. Sir William Trumbull, a veteran statesman, who had held the highest stations, both diplomatic and ministerial, made him his daily companion. Wycherley, the old *roué* of the town, a second-rate wit, but not the less jealous on that account, showed the utmost deference to one whom, as a man of fashion, he must have regarded with contempt, and between whom and himself there were nearly "fifty good years of fair and foul weather." Cromwell,* a fox-hunting

* Dr Johnson said, that all he could discover about Mr Cromwell was the fact of his going a-hunting in a tie-wig; but Gay has

country gentleman, but uniting with that character the pretensions of a wit, and affecting also the reputation of a rake, cultivated his regard with zeal and conscious inferiority. Nay, which never in any other instance happened to the most fortunate poet, his very inaugural essays in verse were treated, not as prelusive efforts of auspicious promise, but as finished works of art, entitled to take their station amongst the literature of the land; and in the most worthless of all his poems, Walsh, an established authority, and whom Dryden pronounced the ablest critic of the age, found proofs of equality with Virgil.

The literary correspondence with these gentlemen is interesting, as a model of what once passed for fine letter-writing. Every nerve was strained to outdo each other in carving all thoughts into a filigree work of rhetoric; and the amœbean contest was like that between two village cocks from neighbouring farms endeavouring to overcrow each other. To us, in this age of purer and more masculine taste, the whole scene takes the ludicrous air of old and young fops dancing a minuet with each other, practising the most elaborate grimaces, sinkings and risings the most awful, bows the most overshadowing, until plain walking, running, or the motions of natural dancing, are thought too insipid for endurance. In this instance the

added another fact to Dr Johnson's, by calling him "honest *hatless* Cromwell with red breeches." This epithet has puzzled the commentators, but its import is obvious enough. Cromwell, as we learn from more than one person, was anxious to be considered a fine gentleman, and devoted to women. Now it was long the custom in that age for such persons, when walking with ladies, to carry their hats in their hand. Louis XV. used to ride by the side of Madame de Pompadour hat in hand.

taste had perhaps really been borrowed from France, though often enough we impute to France what is the native growth of all minds placed in similar circumstances. Madame de Sevigné's Letters were really models of grace. But Balzac, whose letters, however, are not without interest, had in some measure formed himself upon the truly magnificent rhetoric of Pliny and Seneca. Pope and his correspondents, meantime, degraded the dignity of rhetoric by applying it to trivial commonplaces of compliment; whereas Seneca applied it to the grandest themes which life or contemplation can supply. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, on first coming amongst the wits of the day, naturally adopted their style. She found this sort of *euphuism* established; and it was not for a very young woman to oppose it. But her masculine understanding and powerful good sense, shaken free, besides, from all local follies by travels and extensive commerce with the world, first threw off these glittering chains of affectation. Dean Swift, by the very constitution of his mind, plain, sinewy, nervous, and courting only the strength that allies itself with homeliness, was always indisposed to this mode of correspondence. And, finally, Pope himself, as his earlier friends died off, and his own understanding acquired strength, laid it aside altogether. One reason doubtless was, that he found it too fatiguing; since in this way of letter-writing he was put to as much expense of wit in amusing an individual correspondent as would for an equal extent have sufficed to delight the whole world. A funambulist may harass his muscles and risk his neck on the tight-rope, but hardly to entertain his own family. Pope, however, had another reason for de-

clining this showy system of fencing; and strange it is that he had not discovered this reason from the very first. As life advanced, it happened unavoidably that real business advanced; the careless condition of youth prompted no topics, or at least prescribed none, but such as were agreeable to the taste, and allowed of an ornamental colouring. But when downright business occurred, exchequer bills to be sold, meetings to be arranged, negotiations confided, difficulties to be explained, here and there by possibility a jest or two might be scattered, a witty allusion thrown in, or a sentiment interwoven; but for the main body of the case, it neither could receive any ornamental treatment, nor if, by any effort of ingenuity, it *had*, could it look otherwise than silly and unreasonable :—

Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri.

Pope's idleness, therefore, on the one hand, concurring with good sense and the necessities of business on the other, drove him to quit his gay rhetoric in letter-writing. But there are passages surviving in his correspondence which indicate that, after all, had leisure and the coarse perplexities of life permitted it, he still looked with partiality upon his youthful style, and cherished it as a first love. But in this harsh world, as the course of true love, so that of rhetoric, never did run smooth; and thus it happened that, with a lingering farewell, he felt himself forced to bid it adieu. Strange that any man should think his own sincere and confidential overflowings of thought and feeling upon books, men, and public affairs, less valuable in a literary view than the legerdemain of

throwing up bubbles into the air for the sake of watching their prismatic hues, like an Indian juggler with his cups and balls. We of this age, who have formed our notions of epistolary excellence from the chastity of Gray's, the brilliancy of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's during her later life, and the mingled good sense and fine feeling of Cowper's, value only those letters of Pope which he himself thought of inferior value. And even with regard to these, we may say that there is a great mistake made; the best of those later letters between Pope and Swift, &c., are not in themselves at all superior to the letters of sensible and accomplished women, such as leave every town in the island by every post. Their chief interest is a derivative one; we are pleased with any letter, good or bad, which relates to men of such eminent talent; and sometimes the subjects discussed have a separate interest for themselves. But as to the quality of the discussion, apart from the person discussing and the thing discussed, so trivial is the value of these letters in a large proportion, that we cannot but wonder at the preposterous value which was set upon them by the writers.* Pope especially ought not to have his ethereal works loaded by the mass of trivial prose which is usually attached to them.

This correspondence, meantime, with the wits of the

* It is strange indeed to find, not only that Pope had so frequently kept rough copies of his own letters, and that he thought so well of them as to repeat the same letter to different persons, as in the case of the two lovers killed by lightning, or even to two sisters, Martha and Therese Blount (who were sure to communicate their letters), but that even Swift had retained copies of *his*.

time, though one mode by which, in the absence of reviews, the reputation of an author was spread, did not perhaps serve the interests of Pope so effectually as the poems which in this way he circulated in those classes of English society whose favour he chiefly courted. One of his friends, the truly kind and accomplished Sir William Trumbull, served him in that way, and perhaps in another eventually even more important. The library of Pope's father was composed exclusively of polemical divinity; a proof, by the way, that he was not a blind convert to the Roman Catholic faith, or, if he was so originally, had reviewed the grounds of it, and adhered to it after strenuous study. In this dearth of books at his own home, and until he was able to influence his father in buying more extensively, Pope had benefited by the loans of his friends; amongst whom it is probable that Sir William, as one of the best scholars of the whole, might assist him most. He certainly offered him the most touching compliment, as it was also the wisest and most paternal counsel, when he besought him, as one *goddess-born*, to quit the convivial society of deep-drinkers:

Heu, fuge nate dea, teque his, ait, eripe malis.

With these aids from friends of rank, and his way thus laid open to public favour, in the year 1709 Pope first came forward upon the stage of literature. The same year which terminated his legal minority introduced him to the public. *Miscellanies* in those days were almost periodical repositories of fugitive verse. Tonson happened at this time to be publishing one of some extent, the sixth volume of which offered a sort of ambush to the young aspirant of Windsor Forest, from which he might watch

the public feeling. The volume was opened by Mr Ambrose Philips, in the character of pastoral poet; and in the same character, but stationed at the end of the volume, and thus covered by his bucolic leader, as a soldier to the rear by the file in advance, appeared Pope; so that he might win a little public notice, without too much seeming to challenge it. This half-clandestine emersion upon the stage of authorship, and his furtive position, are both mentioned by Pope as accidents, but as accidents in which he rejoiced, and not improbably accidents which Tonson had arranged with a view to his satisfaction. It must appear strange that Pope at twenty-one should choose to come forward for the first time with a work composed at sixteen. A difference of five years at that stage of life is of more effect than of twenty at a later; and his own expanding judgment could hardly fail to inform him that his "Pastorals" were by far the worst of his works. In reality, let us not deny, that had Pope never written anything else, his name would not have been known as a name even of promise, but would probably have been redeemed from oblivion by some satirist or writer of a "Dunciad." Were a man to meet with such a nondescript monster as the following, viz.—"*Love out of Mount Ætna by a Whirlwind*," he would suppose himself reading the "Racing Calendar." Yet this hybrid creature is one of the many zoological monsters to whom the "Pastorals" introduce us:—

> I know thee, love! on foreign mountains born,
> Wolves gave thee suck, and savage tigers fed.
> Thou wert from Ætna's burning entrails torn,
> Got by fierce whirlwinds, and in thunder born.

But the very names "Damon" and "Strephon," "Phillis" and "Delia," are rank with childishness. Arcadian life is at the best a feeble conception, and rests upon the false principle of crowding together all the luscious sweets of rural life, undignified by the danger which attends pastoral life in our climate, and unrelieved by shades, either moral or physical. And the Arcadia of Pope's age was the spurious Arcadia of the opera theatre, and, what is worse, of the French opera.

The hostilities which followed between these rival wooers of the pastoral muse are well known. Pope, irritated at what he conceived the partiality shown to Philips in the "Guardian," pursued the review ironically; and, whilst affecting to load his antagonist with praises, draws into pointed relief some of his most flagrant faults. The result, however, we cannot believe. That all the wits, except Addison, were duped by the irony, is quite impossible. Could any man of sense mistake for praise the remark that Philips had imitated "*every* line of Strada;" that he had introduced wolves into England, and proved himself the first of gardeners by making his flowers "blow all in the same season?" Or, suppose those passages unnoticed, could the broad sneer escape him where Pope taxes the other writer (viz., himself) with having deviated "into downright poetry?" or the outrageous ridicule of Philips' style, as setting up for the ideal type of the pastoral style the quotation from Gay, beginning,

> Rager, go vetch tha kee, or else tha zun
> Will quite bego before ch' 'avs half a don!

Philips is said to have resented this treatment by threats

of personal chastisement to Pope, and even hanging up a rod at Button's Coffee-house. We may be certain that Philips never disgraced himself by such ignoble conduct. If the public, indeed, were universally duped by the paper, what motive had Philips for resentment? Or, in any case, what plea had he for attacking Pope, who had not come forward as the author of the Essay? But, from Pope's confidential account of the matter, we know that Philips saw him daily, and never offered him "any indecorum;" though, for some cause or other, Pope pursued Philips with virulence through life.

In the year 1711 Pope published his "Essay on Criticism," which some people have very unreasonably fancied his best performance; and in the same year his "Rape of the Lock," the most exquisite monument of playful fancy that universal literature offers. It wanted, however, as yet, the principle of its vitality, in wanting the machinery of sylphs and gnomes, with which addition it was first published in 1714.

In the year 1712 Pope appeared again before the public as the author of the "Temple of Fame," and the "Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady." Much speculation has arisen on the question concerning the name of this lady, and the more interesting question concerning the nature of the persecutions and misfortunes which she suffered. Pope appears purposely to decline answering the questions of his friends upon that point; at least the questions have reached us, and the answers have not. Joseph Warton supposed himself to have ascertained four facts about her: that her name was Wainsbury; that she was deformed in person; that she

retired into a convent from some circumstances connected with an attachment to a young man of inferior rank; and that she killed herself, not by a sword, as the poet insinuates, but by a halter. As to the latter statement, it may very possibly be true; such a change would be a very slight exercise of the poet's privileges. As to the rest, there are scarcely grounds enough for an opinion. Pope certainly speaks of her under the name of Mrs (*i.e.*, Miss) W——, which at least argues a poetical exaggeration in describing her as a being "that once had *titles*, honour, wealth, and fame;" and he may as much have exaggerated her pretensions to beauty. It is indeed noticeable that he speaks simply of her *decent* limbs, which, in any English use of the word, does not imply much enthusiasm of praise. She appears to have been the niece of a Lady A——; and Mr Craggs, afterwards secretary of state, wrote to Lady A—— on her behalf, and otherwise took an interest in her fate. As to her being a relative of the Duke of Buckingham's, that rests upon a mere conjectural interpretation applied to a letter of that nobleman's. But all things about this unhappy lady are as yet enveloped in mystery. And not the least part of the mystery is a letter of Pope's to a Mr C——, bearing date 1732, that is, just twenty years after the publication of the poem, in which Pope, in a manly tone, justifies himself for his estrangement, and presses against his unknown correspondent the very blame which he had applied generally to the kinsman of the poor victim in 1712. Now, unless there is some mistake in the date, how are we to explain this gentleman's long lethargy, and his sudden sensibility to Pope's

anathema, with which the world had resounded for twenty years?

Pope had now established his reputation with the public as the legitimate successor and heir to the poetical supremacy of Dryden. His "Rape of the Lock" was unrivalled in ancient or modern literature, and the time had now arrived when, instead of seeking to extend his fame, he might count upon a pretty general support in applying what he had already established to the promotion of his own interest. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1713, he formed a final resolution of undertaking a new translation of the "Iliad." It must be observed that already in 1709, concurrently with his Pastorals, he had published specimens of such a translation; and these had been communicated to his friends some time before. In particular, Sir William Trumbull, on the 9th of April 1708, urged upon Pope a complete translation of both "Iliad" and "Odyssey." Defective skill in the Greek language, exaggeration of the difficulties, and the timidity of a writer as yet unknown, and not quite twenty years old, restrained Pope for five years and more. What he had practised as a sort of *bravura*, for a single effort of display, he recoiled from as a daily task to be pursued through much toil, and a considerable section of his life. However, he dallied with the purpose, starting difficulties in the temper of one who wishes to hear them undervalued; until at length Sir Richard Steele determined him to the undertaking,—a fact overlooked by the biographers, but which is ascertained by Ayre's account of that interview between Pope and Addison, probably in 1716, which sealed the rupture between them. In the autumn of 1713, he made

his design known amongst his friends. Accordingly, on the 21st of October, we have Lord Lansdowne's letter, expressing his great pleasure at the communication; on the 26th, we have Addison's letter encouraging him to the task; and in November of the same year occurs the amusing scene so graphically described by Bishop Kennet, when Dean Swift presided in the conversation, and amongst other indications of his conscious authority, "instructed a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr Pope, who had *begun* a translation of Homer into English verse, for which he must have them all subscribe; for," says he, "*the author shall not begin to print until I have a thousand guineas for him.*"

If this were the extent of what Swift anticipated from the work, he fell miserably below the result. But, perhaps, he spoke only of a cautionary *arrha* or earnest. As this was unquestionably the greatest literary labour, as to profit, ever executed, not excepting the most lucrative of Sir Walter Scott's, if due allowance be made for the altered value of money, and if we consider the "Odyssey" as forming part of the labour, it may be right to state the particulars of Pope's contract with Lintot.

The number of subscribers to the "Iliad" was 575, and the number of copies subscribed for was 654. The work was to be printed in six quarto volumes, and the subscription was a guinea a volume. Consequently by the subscription Pope obtained six times 654 guineas, or L.4218, 6s. (for the guinea then passed for 21s. 6d.); and for the copyright of each volume Lintot offered L.200, consequently L.1200 for the whole six; so that from the "Iliad" the profit exactly amounted to L.5310, 16s. Of

the "Odyssey," 574 copies were subscribed for. It was to be printed in five quarto volumes, and the subscription was a guinea a volume. Consequently by the subscription Pope obtained five times 574 guineas, or L.3085, 5s.; and for the copyright Lintot offered L.600. The total sum received therefore by Pope, on account of the "Odyssey," was L.3685, 6s. But in this instance he had two coadjutors, Broome and Fenton; between them they translated twelve books, leaving twelve to Pope. The notes also were compiled by Broome; but the postscript to the notes was written by Pope. Fenton received L.300, Broome L.500. Such, at least, is Warton's account, and more probable than that of Ruffhead, who not only varies the proportions, but increases the whole sum given to the assistants by L.100. Thus far we had followed the guidance of mere probabilities, as they lie upon the face of the transaction. But we have since detected a written statement of Pope's, unaccountably overlooked by the biographers, and serving of itself to show how negligently they have read the works of their illustrious subject. The statement is entitled to the fullest attention and confidence, not being a hasty or casual notice of the transaction, but pointedly shaped to meet a calumnious rumour against Pope in his character of paymaster; as if he who had found so much liberality from publishers in his own person, were niggardly or unjust as soon as he assumed those relations to others. Broome, it was alleged, had expressed himself dissatisfied with Pope's remuneration. Perhaps he had; for he would be likely to frame his estimate for his own services from the scale of Pope's reputed gains; and those gains would, at any rate, be enormously exagge-

rated, as uniformly happens where there is a basis of the marvellous to begin with. And, secondly, it would be natural enough to assume the previous result from the "Iliad" as a fair standard for computation; but in this, as we know, all parties found themselves disappointed, and Broome had the less right to murmur at this, since the arrangement with himself as chief journeyman in the job was one main cause of the disappointment. There was also another reason why Broome should be less satisfied than Fenton. Verse for verse, any one thousand lines of a translation so purely mechanical might stand against any other thousand; and so far the equation of claims was easy. A book-keeper, with a pen behind his ear, and Cocker's "Golden Rule" open before him, could do full justice to Mr Broome *as a poet* every Saturday night. But Broome had a separate account-current for pure prose against Pope. One he had in conjunction with Fenton for verses delivered on the premises at so much per hundred, on which there could be no demur, except as to the allowance for tare and tret as a discount in favour of Pope. But the prose account, the account for notes, requiring very various degrees of reading and research, allowed of no such easy equation. *There* it was, we conceive, that Broome's discontent arose. Pope, however, declares that he had given him L.500, thus confirming the proportions of Warton against Ruffhead (that is, in effect, Warburton), and some other advantages which were not in money, nor deductions at all from his own money profits, but which may have been worth so much money to Broome as to give some colourable truth to Ruffhead's allegation of an additional L.100. In direct

money, it remains certain that Fenton had three and Broome five hundred pounds.

It follows, therefore, that for the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" jointly he received a sum of L.8996, 1s., and paid for assistance L.800, which leaves to himself a clear sum of L.8196, 1s. And, in fact, his profits ought to be calculated without deduction, since it was his own choice, from indolence, to purchase assistance.

The "Iliad" was commenced about October 1713. In the summer of the following year he was so far advanced as to begin making arrangements with Lintot for the printing; and the first two books, in manuscript, were put into the hands of Lord Halifax. In June 1715, between the 10th and 28th, the subscribers received their copies of the first volume; and in July, Lintot began to publish that volume generally. Some readers will inquire, Who paid for the printing and paper, &c.? All this expense fell upon Lintot, for whom Pope was superfluously anxious. The sagacious bookseller understood what he was about; and, when a pirated edition was published in Holland, he counteracted the injury by printing a cheap edition, of which 7500 copies were sold in a few weeks; an extraordinary proof of the extended interest in literature. The second, third, and fourth volumes of the "Iliad," each containing, like the first, four books, were published successively in 1716, 1717, 1718; and in 1720 Pope completed the work by publishing the fifth volume, containing five books, and the sixth, containing the last three, with the requisite supplementary apparatus.

The "Odyssey" was commenced in 1723 (not 1722, as Mr Roscoe virtually asserts at p. 259), and the publication

of it was finished in 1725. The sale, however, was much inferior to that of the "Iliad," for which more reasons than one might be assigned. But there can be no doubt that Pope himself depreciated the work, by his undignified arrangements for working by subordinate hands. Such a process may answer in sculpture, because there a quantity of rough-hewing occurs, which can no more be improved by committing it to a Phidias, than a common shop-bill could be improved in its arithmetic by Sir Isaac Newton. But in literature such arrangements are degrading; and, above all, in a work which was but too much exposed already to the presumption of being a mere effort of mechanic skill, or (as Curll said to the House of Lords) "*a knack*," it was deliberately helping forward that idea to let off parts of the labour. Only think of Milton letting off by contract to the lowest offer, and to be delivered by such a day (for which good security to be found), six books of "Paradise Lost." It is true, the great dramatic authors were often *collaborateurs*, but their case was essentially different. The loss, however, fell not upon Pope, but upon Lintot, who, on this occasion, was out of temper, and talked rather broadly of prosecution. But that was out of the question. Pope had acted indiscreetly, but nothing could be alleged against his honour; for he had expressly warned the public that he did not, as in the other case, profess *to translate*, but to *undertake** *a translation*

* The word *undertake* had not yet lost the meaning of Shakspeare's age, in which it was understood to describe those cases where, the labour being of a miscellaneous kind, some person in chief offered to overlook and conduct the whole, whether with or without personal labour. The modern *undertaker*, limited to the

of the "Odyssey." Lintot, however, was no loser absolutely, though he might be so in relation to his expectations; on the contrary, he grew rich, bought land, and became sheriff of the county in which his estates lay.

We have pursued the Homeric labours uninterruptedly from their commencement in 1713 till their final termination in 1725, a period of twelve years or nearly; because this was the task to which Pope owed the dignity, if not the comforts, of his life, since it was this which enabled him to decline a pension from all administrations, and even from his friend Craggs, the secretary, to decline the express offer of L.300 per annum. Indeed, Pope is always proud to own his obligations to Homer. In the interval, however, between the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," Pope listened to proposals made by Jacob Tonson that he should revise an edition of Shakspeare. For this, which was in fact the first attempt at establishing the text of the mighty poet, Pope obtained but little money, and still less reputation. He received, according to tradition, only L.217, 12s. for his trouble of collation, which must have been considerable, and some other trifling editorial labour. And the opinion of all judges, from the first so unfavourable as to have depreciated the money value of the book enormously, perhaps from a prepossession of the public mind against the fitness of Pope for executing the dull labours of revision, has ever since pronounced this work the very worst edition in existence. For the edition we have little to plead; but for the editor it is but just to make three

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care of funerals, was then but one of numerous cases to which the term was applied.

apologies: In the *first* place, he wrote a brilliant preface, which, although (like other works of the same class) too much occupied in displaying his own ability, and too often, for the sake of an effective antithesis, doing deep injustice to Shakspeare, yet undoubtedly, as a whole, extended his fame, by giving the sanction and countersign of a great wit to the national admiration. *Secondly*, as Dr Johnson admits, Pope's failure pointed out the right road to his successors. *Thirdly*, even in this failure it is but fair to say, that in a graduated scale of merit, as distributed amongst the long succession of editors through that century, Pope holds a rank proportionable to his age. For the year 1720, he is no otherwise below Theobald, Hanmer, Capell, Warburton, or even Johnson, than as they are successively below each other, and all of them as to accuracy below Steevens, as he again was below Malone and Read.

The gains from Shakspeare would hardly counterbalance the loss which Pope sustained this year from the South Sea bubble. One thing, by the way, is still unaccountably neglected by writers on this question: how it was that the great Mississippi bubble, during the Orleans regency in Paris, should have happened to coincide with that of London. If this were accident, how marvellous that the same insanity should possess the two great capitals of Christendom in the same year! If, again, it were not accident, but due to some common cause, why is not that cause explained? Pope to his nearest friends never stated the amount of his loss. The biographers report that at one time his stock was worth from twenty to thirty thousand pounds. But that is quite impossible. It is

true that, as the stock rose at one time a thousand per cent., this would not imply on Pope's part an original purchase beyond twenty-five hundred pounds or thereabouts. But Pope has furnished an argument against *that*, which we shall improve. He quotes more than once, as applicable to his own case, the old proverbial riddle of Hesiod, πλεον ἡμισυ παντος (*the half is more than the whole*). What did he mean by that? We understand it thus: that between the selling and buying, the variations had been such as to sink his shares to one-half of the price they had once reached, but, even at that depreciation, to leave him richer on selling out than he had been at first. But the half of L.25,000 would be a far larger sum than Pope could have ventured to risk upon a fund confessedly liable to daily fluctuation. L.3000 would be the utmost he could risk; in which case the half of L.25,000 would have left him so very much richer that he would have proclaimed his good fortune as an evidence of his skill and prudence. Yet, on the contrary, he wished his friends to understand at times that he had lost. But his friends forgot to ask one important question: Was the word *loss* to be understood in relation to the imaginary and nominal wealth which he once possessed, or in relation to the absolute sum invested in the South Sea fund? The truth is, Pope practised on this, as on other occasions, a little finessing, which is the chief foible in his character. His object was that, according to circumstances, he might vindicate his own freedom from the common mania, in case his enemies should take that handle for attacking him; or might have it in his power to plead poverty, and to account for it, in case he should ever accept that pen-

sion which had been so often tendered but never sternly rejected.

In 1723 Pope lost one of his dearest friends, Bishop Atterbury, by banishment; a sentence most justly incurred, and mercifully mitigated by the hostile Whig Government. On the bishop's trial, a circumstance occurred to Pope which flagrantly corroborated his own belief in his natural disqualification for public life. He was summoned as an evidence on his friend's behalf. He had but a dozen words to say, simply explaining the general tenor of his lordship's behaviour at Bromley; and yet, under this trivial task, though supported by the enthusiasm of his friendship, he broke down. Lord Bolingbroke, returning from exile, met the bishop at the sea-side; upon which it was wittily remarked that they were "exchanged." Lord Bolingbroke supplied to Pope the place, or perhaps more than supplied the place, of the friend he had lost; for Bolingbroke was a freethinker, and so far more entertaining to Pope, even whilst partially dissenting, than Atterbury, whose clerical profession laid him under restraints of decorum, and latterly, there is reason to think, of conscience.

In 1725, on closing the "Odyssey," Pope announces his intention to Swift of quitting the labours of a translator, and thenceforwards applying himself to original composition. This resolution led to the "Essay on Man," which appeared soon afterwards; and, with the exception of two labours, which occupied Pope in the interval between 1726 and 1729, the rest of his life may properly be described as dedicated to the further extension of that Essay. The two works which he interposed were a col-

lection of the fugitive papers, whether prose or verse, which he and Dean Swift had scattered amongst their friends at different periods of life. The avowed motive for this publication, and in fact the secret motive, as disclosed in Pope's confidential letters, was to make it impossible thenceforwards for piratical publishers like Curll. Both Pope and Swift dreaded the malice of Curll in case they should die before him. It was one of Curll's regular artifices to publish a heap of trash on the death of any eminent man, under the title of his "Remains;" and in allusion to that practice it was that Arbuthnot most wittily called Curll "one of the new terrors of death." By publishing *all*, Pope would have disarmed Curll beforehand; and *that* was in fact the purpose; and that plea only could be offered by two grave authors, one forty, the other sixty years old, for reprinting *jeux d'esprit* that never had any other apology than the youth of their authors. Yet, strange to say, after all, some were omitted; and the omission of one opened the door to Curll as well as that of a score. Let Curll have once inserted the narrow end of the wedge, he would soon have driven it home.

This "Miscellany," however, in three volumes (published in 1727, but afterwards increased by a fourth in 1732), though in itself a trifling work, had one vast consequence. It drew after it swarms of libels and lampoons, levelled almost exclusively at Pope, although the cipher of the joint authors stood entwined upon the title-page. These libels in *their* turn produced a second re-action; and, by stimulating Pope to effectual anger, eventually drew forth, for the everlasting admiration of posterity,

the very greatest of Pope's works,—a monument of satirical power the greatest which man has produced, not excepting the "MacFleckno" of Dryden, namely, the immortal "Dunciad."

In October of the year 1727 this poem, in its original form, was completed. Many editions, not spurious altogether, nor surreptitious, but with some connivance, not yet explained, from Pope, were printed in Dublin and in London. But the first quarto and acknowledged edition was published in London early in "1728-9," as the editors choose to write it, that is (without perplexing the reader), in 1729; on March 12 of which year it was presented by the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, to the king and queen at St James's.

Like a hornet, who is said to leave his sting in the wound, and afterwards to languish away, Pope felt so greatly exhausted by the efforts connected with the "Dunciad" (which are far greater, in fact, than all his Homeric labours put together), that he prepared his friends to expect for the future only an indolent companion and a hermit. Events rapidly succeeded which tended to strengthen the impression he had conceived of his own decay, and certainly to increase his disgust with the world. In 1732 died his friend Atterbury; and on December the 7th of the same year Gay, the most unpretending of all the wits whom he knew, and the one with whom he had at one time been domesticated, expired, after an illness of three days, which Dr Arbuthnot declares to have been "the most precipitate" he ever knew. But in fact Gay had long been decaying from the ignoble vice of too much and too luxurious eating. Six

months after this loss, which greatly affected Pope, came the last deadly wound which this life could inflict, in the death of his mother. She had for some time been in her dotage, and recognised no face but that of her son, so that her death was not unexpected; but that circumstance did not soften the blow of separation to Pope. She died on the 7th of June 1733, being then ninety-three years old. Three days after, writing to Richardson the painter, for the purpose of urging him to come down and take her portrait before the coffin was closed, he says, "I thank God her death was as easy as her life was innocent; and as it cost her not a groan nor even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity" that "it would afford the finest image of a saint expired that ever painting drew. Adieu, may you die as happily." The funeral took place on the 11th; Pope then quitted the house, unable to support the silence of her chamber, and did not return for months, nor in fact ever reconciled himself to the sight of her vacant apartment.

Swift also he had virtually lost for ever. In April 1727 this unhappy man had visited Pope for the last time. During this visit occurred the death of George I. Great expectations arose from that event amongst the Tories, in which, of course, Swift shared. It was reckoned upon as a thing of course that Walpole would be dismissed. But this bright gleam of hope proved as treacherous as all before; and the anguish of this final disappointment perhaps it was which brought on a violent attack of Swift's constitutional malady. On the last of August he quitted Pope's house abruptly; concealed him-

self in London; and finally quitted it, as stealthily as he had before quitted Twickenham, for Ireland, never more to return. He left a most affectionate letter for Pope; but his affliction, and his gloomy anticipations of insanity, were too oppressive to allow of his seeking a personal interview.

Pope might now describe himself pretty nearly as *ultimus suorum;* and if he would have friends in future, he must seek them, as he complains bitterly, almost amongst strangers and another generation. This sense of desolation may account for the acrimony which too much disfigures his writings henceforward. Between 1732 and 1740 he was chiefly engaged in satires, which uniformly speak a high moral tone in the midst of personal invective; or in poems directly philosophical, which almost as uniformly speak the bitter tone of satire in the midst of dispassionate ethics. His "Essay on Man" was but one link in a general course which he had projected of moral philosophy, here and there pursuing his themes into the fields of metaphysics, but no farther in either field of morals or metaphysics than he could make compatible with a poetical treatment. These works, however, naturally entangled him in feuds of various complexions with people of very various pretensions; and to admirers of Pope so fervent as we profess ourselves, it is painful to acknowledge that the dignity of his latter years, and the becoming tranquillity of increasing age, are sadly disturbed by the petulance and the tone of irritation which, alike to those in the wrong and in the right, inevitably besiege all personal disputes. He was agitated besides by a piratical publication of his correspondence. This emanated of

course from the den of Curll, the universal robber and "*blatant beast*" of those days; and besides the injury offered to his feelings by exposing some youthful sallies which he wished to have suppressed, it drew upon him a far more disgraceful imputation, most assuredly unfounded, but accredited by Dr Johnson, and consequently in full currency to this day, of having acted collusively with Curll, or at least through Curll, for the publication of what he wished the world to see, but could not else have devised any decent pretext for exhibiting.

The disturbance of his mind on this occasion led to a circular request, dispersed amongst his friends, that they would return his letters. All complied except Swift. He only delayed, and in fact shuffled. But it is easy to read in his evasions, and Pope, in spite of his vexation, read the same tale, viz., that in consequence of his recurring attacks and increasing misery, he was himself the victim of artifices amongst those who surrounded him. What Pope apprehended happened. The letters were all published in Dublin and in London, the originals being then only returned when they had done their work of exposure.

Such a tenor of life, so constantly fretted by petty wrongs or by leaden insults, to which only the celebrity of their object lent force or wings, allowed little opportunity to Pope for recalling his powers from angry themes, and converging them upon others of more catholic philosophy. To the last he continued to conceal vipers beneath his flowers; or rather, speaking proportionately to the case, he continued to sheath amongst the gleaming but innocuous lightnings of his departing splendours the thunderbolts which blasted for ever. His last appear-

ance was his greatest. In 1742 he published the fourth book of the "Dunciad;" to which it has with much reason been objected, that it stands in no obvious relation to the other three, but which, taken as a separate whole, is by far the most brilliant and the weightiest of his works. Pope was aware of the *hiatus* between this last book and the rest, on which account he sometimes called it the greater "Dunciad;" and it would have been easy for him, with a shallow Warburtonian ingenuity, to invent links that might have satisfied a mere *verbal* sense of connection. But he disdained this puerile expedient. The fact was, and could not be disguised from any penetrating eye, that the poem was not a pursuit of the former subjects; it had arisen spontaneously at various times, by looking at the same general theme of dulness (which, in Pope's sense, includes all aberrations of the intellect, nay, even any defective equilibrium amongst the faculties) under a different angle of observation, and from a different centre. In this closing book, not only bad authors, as in the other three, but all abuses of science or antiquarian knowledge, or connoisseurship in the arts, are attacked, virtuosi, medalists, butterfly-hunters, florists, erring metaphysicians, &c., are all pierced through and through as with the shafts of Apollo. But the imperfect plan of the work as to its internal economy, no less than its exterior relations, is evident in many places; and in particular the whole catastrophe of the poem, if it can be so called, is linked to the rest by a most insufficient incident. To give a closing grandeur to his work, Pope had conceived the idea of representing the earth as lying universally under the incubation of one mighty spirit of dulness; a

sort of millenium, as we may call it, for ignorance, error, and stupidity. This would take leave of the reader with effect; but how was it to be introduced? at what era? under what exciting cause? As to the eras, Pope could not settle that; unless it were a *future* era, the description of it could not be delivered as a prophecy; and not being prophetic, it would want much of its grandeur. Yet, *as* a part of futurity, how is it connected with our present times? Do they and their pursuits lead to it as a possibility, or as a contingency upon certain habits which we have it in our power to eradicate (in which case this vision of dulness has a *practical* warning), or is it a mere necessity, one amongst the many changes attached to the cycles of human destiny, or which chance brings round with the revolutions of its wheel? All this Pope could not determine; but the exciting cause he *has* determined, and it is preposterously below the effect. The Goddess of Dulness yawns; and her yawn, which, after all, should rather express the fact and state of universal dulness than its cause, produces a change over all nations tantamount to a long eclipse. Meantime, with all its defects of plan, the poem, as to execution, is superior to all which Pope has done; the composition is much superior to that of the "Essay on Man," and more profoundly poetic: the parodies drawn from Milton, as also in the former books, have a beauty and effect which cannot be expressed; and if a young lady wished to cull for her album a passage from all Pope's writings, which, without a trace of irritation or acrimony, should yet present an exquisite gem of independent beauty, she could not find another passage equal to the little story of the

florist and the butterfly-hunter. They plead their cause separately before the throne of dulness, the florist telling how he had reared a superb carnation, which, in honour of the queen, he called Caroline, when his enemy, pursuing a butterfly which settled on the carnation, in securing his own object, had destroyed that of the plaintiff. The defendant replies with equal beauty; and it may certainly be affirmed, that for brilliancy of colouring and the art of poetical narration, the tale is not surpassed by any in the language.

This was the last effort of Pope worthy of separate notice. He was now decaying rapidly, and sensible of his own decay. His complaint was a dropsy of the chest, and he knew it to be incurable. Under these circumstances his behaviour was admirably philosophical. He employed himself in revising and burnishing all his later works, as those upon which he wisely relied for his reputation with future generations. In this task he was assisted by Dr Warburton, a new literary friend, who had introduced himself to the favourable notice of Pope about four years before, by a defence of the "Essay on Man," which Crousaz had attacked, but in general indirectly and ineffectually, by attacking it through the blunders of a very faulty translation. This poem, however, still labours, to religious readers, under two capital defects. If man, according to Pope, is now so admirably placed in the universal system of things, that evil only could result from any change, then it seems to follow either that a fall of man is inadmissible, or at least that, by placing him in his true centre, it had been a blessing universally. The other objection lies in this, that if all is right already,

and in this earthly station, then one argument for a future state, as the scene in which evil is to be redressed, seems weakened or undermined.

As the weakness of Pope increased, his nearest friends, Lord Bolingbroke and a few others, gathered around him. The last scenes were passed almost with ease and tranquillity. He dined in company two days before he died; and on the very day preceding his death he took an airing on Blackheath. A few mornings before he died, he was found very early in his library writing on the immortality of the soul. This was an effort of delirium; and he suffered otherwise from this affection of the brain, and from inability to think in his closing hours. But his humanity and goodness, it was remarked, had survived his intellectual faculties. He died on the 30th of May 1744, and so quietly, that the attendants could not distinguish the exact moment of his dissolution.

We had prepared an account of Pope's quarrels, in which we had shown that, generally, he was not the aggressor; and often was atrociously ill-used before he retorted. This service to Pope's memory we had judged important, because it is upon these quarrels chiefly that the erroneous opinion has built itself of Pope's fretfulness and irritability. And this unamiable feature of his nature, together with a proneness to petty manœuvring, are the main foibles that malice has been able to charge upon Pope's moral character. Yet, with no better foundation for their malignity than these doubtful propensities,—of which the first perhaps was a constitutional defect, a defect of his temperament rather than his will, and the second has been much exaggerated,—many writers have

taken upon themselves to treat Pope as a man if not absolutely unprincipled, and without moral sensibility, yet as mean, little-minded, indirect, splenetic, vindictive, and morose. Now the difference between ourselves and these writers is fundamental. They fancy that in Pope's character a basis of ignoble qualities was here and there slightly relieved by a few shining spots; we, on the contrary, believe that in Pope lay a disposition radically noble and generous, clouded and overshadowed by superficial foibles, or, to adopt the distinction of Shakspeare, they see nothing but "dust a little gilt," and we "gold a little dusted." A very rapid glance we will throw over the general outline of his character.

As a friend, it is noticed emphatically by Martha Blount and other contemporaries, who must have had the best means of judging, that no man was so warm-hearted, or so much sacrificed himself for others, as Pope; and in fact many of his quarrels grew out of this trait in his character. For once that he levelled his spear in his own quarrel, at least twice he did so on behalf of his insulted parents or his friends. Pope was also noticeable for the duration of his friendships;* some dropped him, but he never

* We may illustrate this feature in the behaviour of Pope to Savage. When all else forsook him, when all beside pleaded the insults of Savage for withdrawing their subscriptions, Pope sent his in advance. And when Savage had insulted *him* also, arrogantly commanding him never "to presume to interfere or meddle in his affairs," dignity and self-respect made Pope obedient to these orders, except when there was an occasion of serving Savage. On his second visit to Bristol (when he returned from Glamorganshire), Savage had been thrown into the jail of the city. One

any, throughout his life. And let it be remembered that amongst Pope's friends were the men of most eminent talents in those days; so that envy at least, or jealousy of rival power, was assuredly no foible of his. In that respect how different from Addison, whose petty manœuvring against Pope proceeded entirely from malignant jealousy. That Addison was more in the wrong even than has generally been supposed, and Pope more thoroughly innocent as well as more generous, we have the means, at a proper opportunity, of showing decisively. As a son, we need not insist on Pope's pre-eminent goodness. Dean Swift, who had lived for months together at Twickenham, declares that he had not only never witnessed, but had never heard of anything like it. As a Christian, Pope appears in a truly estimable light. He found himself a Roman Catholic by accident of birth; so was his mother; but his father was so upon personal conviction and conversion, yet not without extensive study of the questions at issue. It would have laid open the road to preferment, and preferment was otherwise abundantly before him, if Pope would have gone over to the Protestant faith. And in his conscience he found no obstacle to that change; he was a philosophical Christian, intolerant of nothing but intolerance, a bigot only

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person only interested himself for this hopeless profligate, and was causing an inquiry to be made about his debts at the time Savage died. So much Dr Johnson admits; but he *forgets* to mention the name of this long-suffering friend. *It was Pope.* Meantime, let us not be supposed to believe the lying legend of Savage; he was doubtless no son of Lady Macclesfield's, but an impostor, who would now be sent to the treadmill.

against bigots. But he remained true to his baptismal profession, partly on a general principle of honour in adhering to a distressed and dishonoured party, but chiefly out of reverence and affection to his mother. In his relation to women, Pope was amiable and gentlemanly, and accordingly was the object of affectionate regard and admiration to many of the most accomplished in that sex. This we mention especially, because we would wish to express our full assent to the manly scorn with which Mr Roscoe repels the libellous insinuations against Pope and Miss Martha Blount. A more innocent connection we do not believe ever existed. As an author, Warburton has recorded that no man ever displayed more candour or more docility to criticisms offered in a friendly spirit. Finally, we sum up all in saying that Pope retained to the last a true and diffusive benignity; that this was the quality which survived all others, notwithstanding the bitter trial which his benignity must have stood through life, and the excitement to a spiteful reaction of feeling which was continually pressed upon him by the scorn and insult which his deformity drew upon him from the unworthy.

But the moral character of Pope is of secondary interest: we are concerned with it only as connected with his great intellectual power. There are three errors which seem current upon this subject: *First*, that Pope drew his impulses from French literature; *secondly*, that he was a poet of inferior rank; *thirdly*, that his merit lies in superior "correctness." With respect to the first notion, it has prevailed by turns in every literature. One stage of society, in every nation, brings men of impas-

sioned minds to the contemplation of manners, and of the social affections of man as exhibited in manners. With this propensity co-operates, no doubt, some degree of despondency when looking at the great models of the literature who have usually pre-occupied the grander passions, and displayed their movements in the earlier periods of literature. Now it happens that the French, from an extraordinary defect in the higher qualities of passion, have attracted the notice of foreign nations chiefly to that field of their literature in which the taste and the unimpassioned understanding preside. But in all nations such literature is a natural growth of the mind, and would arise equally if the French literature had never existed. The wits of Queen Anne's reign, or even of Charles II.'s, were not French by their taste or their imitation. Butler and Dryden were surely not French; and of Milton we need not speak; as little was Pope French, either by his institution or by his models. Boileau he certainly admired too much; and, for the sake of a poor parallelism with a passage about Greece in Horace, he has falsified history in the most ludicrous manner, without a shadow of countenance from facts, in order to make out that we, like the Romans, received laws of taste from those whom we had conquered. But these are insulated cases and accidents, not to insist on his known and most profound admiration, often expressed, for both Chaucer and Shakspeare and Milton. Secondly, that Pope is to be classed as an inferior poet, has arisen purely from a confusion between the departments of poetry which he cultivated and the merit of his culture. The first place must undoubtedly be given for ever,—it

cannot be refused,—to the impassioned movements of the tragic, and to the majestic movements of the epic muse. We cannot alter the relations of things out of favour to an individual. But in his own department, whether higher or lower, that man is supreme who has not yet been surpassed; and such a man is Pope. As to the final notion, first started by Walsh, and propagated by Warton, it is the most absurd of all the three; it is not from superior correctness that Pope is esteemed more correct, but because the compass and sweep of his performances lie more within the range of ordinary judgments. Many questions that have been raised upon Milton or Shakspeare, questions relating to so subtle a subject as the flux and reflux of human passion, lie far above the region of ordinary capacities; and the indeterminateness or even carelessness of the judgment is transferred by a common confusion to its objects. But waiving this, let us ask what is meant by "correctness?" Correctness in what? In developing the thought? In connecting it, or effecting the transitions? In the use of words? In the grammar? In the metre? Under every one of these limitations of the idea, we maintain that Pope is *not* distinguished by correctness; nay, that, as compared with Shakspeare, he is eminently incorrect. Produce us from any drama of Shakspeare one of those leading passages that all men have by heart, and show us any eminent defect in the very sinews of the thought. It is impossible; defects there may be, but they will always be found irrelevant to the main central thought, or to its expression. Now turn to Pope; the first striking passage which offers itself to

our memory is the famous character of Addison, ending thus :—

> Who would not laugh, if such a man there be,
> Who but must weep if Atticus were he?

Why must we laugh? Because we find a grotesque assembly of noble and ignoble qualities. Very well; but why, then, must we weep? Because this assemblage is found actually existing in an eminent man of genius. Well, that is a good reason for weeping; we weep for the degradation of human nature. But then revolves the question, Why must we laugh? Because, if the belonging to a man of genius were a sufficient reason for weeping, so much we know from the very first. The very first line says, "Peace to all such. But were there one whose fires *true genius kindles* and fair fame inspires." Thus falls to the ground the whole antithesis of this famous character. We are to change our mood from laughter to tears upon a sudden discovery that the character belonged to a man of genius; and this we had already known from the beginning. Match us this prodigious oversight in Shakspeare. Again, take the "Essay on Criticism:" it is a collection of independent maxims, tied together into a fasciculus by the printer, but having no natural order or logical dependency: generally so vague as to mean nothing: like the general rules of justice, &c., in ethics, to which every man assents; but when the question comes about any practical case, *is* it just? The opinions fly asunder far as the poles. And what is remarkable, many of the rules are violated by no man so often as by Pope, and by Pope nowhere so often as in

this very poem. As a single instance, he proscribes monosyllabic lines; and in no English poem of any pretensions are there so many lines of that class as in this. We have counted above a score, and the last line of all is monosyllabic.

Not, therefore, for superior correctness, but for qualities the very same as belong to his most distinguished brethren, is Pope to be considered a great poet; for impassioned thinking, powerful description, pathetic reflection, brilliant narration. His characteristic difference is simply that he carried these powers into a different field, and moved chiefly amongst the social paths of men, and viewed their characters as operating through their manners. And our obligations to him arise chiefly on this ground, that having already, in the persons of earlier poets, carried off the palm in all the grander trials of intellectual strength, for the majesty of the epopee and the impassioned vehemence of the tragic drama, to Pope we owe it that we can now claim an equal pre-eminence in the sportive and aërial graces of the mock heroic and satiric muse; that in the "Dunciad" we possess a peculiar form of satire, in which (according to a plan unattempted by any other nation) we see alternately her festive smile and her gloomiest scowl; that the grave good sense of the nation has here found its brightest mirror; and, finally, that through Pope the cycle of our poetry is perfected and made orbicular, that from that day we might claim the laurel equally, whether for dignity or grace.

GOETHE.

JOHN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE, a man of commanding influence in the literature of modern Germany throughout the latter half of his long life, and possessing two separate claims upon our notice: one in right of his own unquestionable talents; and another much stronger, though less direct, arising out of his position, and the extravagant partisanship put forward on his behalf for the last forty years. The literary body in all countries, and for reasons which rest upon a sounder basis than that of private jealousies, have always been disposed to a republican simplicity in all that regards the assumption of rank and personal pretensions. *Valeat quantum valere potest*, is the form of license to every man's ambition, coupled with its caution: let his influence and authority be commensurate with his attested value: and, because no man in the present infinity of human speculation, and the present multiformity of human power, can hope for more than a very limited superiority, there is an end at once to all *absolute* dictatorship. The dictatorship in any case could be only *relative*, and in relation to a single department of art or knowledge; and this for a reason stronger

even than that already noticed, viz. the vast extent of the field on which the intellect is now summoned to employ itself. That objection, as it applies only to the *degree* of the difficulty, might be met by a corresponding degree of mental energy; such a thing may be supposed, at least. But another difficulty there is, of a profounder character, which cannot be so easily parried: those who have reflected at all upon the fine arts, know that power of one kind is often inconsistent, positively incompatible, with power of another kind. For example, the *dramatic* mind is incompatible with the *epic*. And though we should consent to suppose that some intellect might arise endowed upon a scale of such angelic comprehensiveness as to vibrate equally and indifferently towards either pole, still it is next to impossible, in the exercise and culture of the two powers, but some bias must arise which would give that advantage to the one over the other which the right arm has over the left. But the supposition, the very case put, is baseless, and countenanced by no precedent. Yet, under this previous difficulty, and with regard to a literature convulsed, if any ever was, by an almost total anarchy, it is a fact notorious to all who take an interest in Germany and its concerns, that Goethe did in one way or other, through the length and breadth of that vast country, establish a supremacy of influence wholly unexampled; a supremacy indeed perilous in a less honourable man, to those whom he might chance to hate, and with regard to himself thus far unfortunate, that it conferred upon every work proceeding from his pen a sort of papal indulgence, an immunity from criticism, or even from the appeals of good sense, such as it is not wholesome that any man

should enjoy. Yet we repeat that German literature was and is in a condition of total anarchy: with this solitary exception, no name, even in the most narrow section of knowledge or of power, has ever been able in that country to challenge unconditional reverence; whereas, with us and in France, name the science, name the art, and we will name the dominant professor; a difference which partly arises out of the fact that England and France are governed in their opinions by two or three capital cities, whilst Germany looks for its leadership to as many cities as there are *residenzen* and universities: for instance, the little territory with which Goethe was connected presented no less than two such public lights; Weimar, the *residenz* or privileged abode of the Grand Duke, and Jena, the university founded by that house. Partly, however, this difference may be due to the greater restlessness, and to the greater energy as respects mere speculation, of the German mind. But no matter whence arising, or how interpreted, the fact is what we have described: absolute confusion, the "anarch old" of Milton, is the one deity whose sceptre is there paramount; and yet *there* it was, in that very realm of chaos, that Goethe built his throne. That he must have looked with trepidation and perplexity upon his wild empire and its "dark foundations," may be supposed. The tenure was uncertain to *him* as regarded its duration; to us it is equally uncertain, and in fact mysterious, as regards its origin. Meantime the mere fact, contrasted with the general tendencies of the German literary world, is sufficient to justify a notice, somewhat circumstantial, of the man in whose favour, whether naturally by force of genius, or by accident

concurring with intrigue, so unexampled a result was effected.

Goethe was born at noonday on the 28th of August 1749, in his father's house at Frankfort on the Maine. The circumstances of his birth were thus far remarkable, that, unless Goethe's vanity deceived him, they led to a happy revolution hitherto retarded by female delicacy falsely directed. From some error of the midwife who attended his mother, the infant Goethe appeared to be still-born. Sons there were as yet none from this marriage; everybody was therefore interested in the child's life; and the panic which arose in consequence, having survived its immediate occasion, was improved into a public resolution (for which no doubt society stood ready at that moment) to found some course of public instruction from this time forward for those who undertook professionally the critical duties of accoucheur.

We have noticed the house in which Goethe was born, as well as the city. Both were remarkable, and fitted to leave lasting impressions upon a young person of sensibility. As to the city, its antiquity is not merely venerable, but almost mysterious; towers were at that time to be found in the mouldering lines of its earliest defences which belonged to the age of Charlemagne, or one still earlier; battlements adapted to a mode of warfare anterior even to that of feudalism or romance. The customs, usages, and local privileges of Frankfort, and the rural districts adjacent, were of a corresponding character. Festivals were annually celebrated at a short distance from the walls, which had descended from a dateless antiquity. Everything which met the eye spoke the language of elder

ages; whilst the river on which the place was seated, its great fair, which still held the rank of the greatest in Christendom, and its connection with the throne of Cæsar and his inauguration, by giving to Frankfort an interest and a public character in the eyes of all Germany, had the effect of countersigning, as it were, by state authority, the importance which she otherwise challenged to her ancestral distinctions. Fit house for such a city, and in due keeping with the general scenery, was that of Goethe's father. It had in fact been composed out of two contiguous houses; that accident had made it spacious and rambling in its plan; whilst a further irregularity had grown out of the original difference in point of level between the corresponding stories of the two houses, making it necessary to connect the rooms of the same *suite* by short flights of steps. Some of these features were no doubt removed by the recast of the house under the name of "repairs" (to evade a city by-law), afterwards executed by his father; but such was the house of Goethe's infancy, and in all other circumstances of style and furnishing equally antique.

The spirit of society in Frankfort, without a court, a university, or a learned body of any extent, or a resident nobility in its neighbourhood, could not be expected to display any very high standard of polish. Yet, on the other hand, as an independent city, governed by its own separate laws and tribunals (that privilege of *autonomy* so dearly valued by ancient Greece) and possessing besides a resident corps of jurisprudents and of agents in various ranks for managing the interests of the German emperor and other princes, Frankfort had the means within herself of giving a liberal tone to the pursuits of her superior

citizens, and of co-operating in no inconsiderable degree with the general movement of the times, political or intellectual. The Memoirs of Goethe himself, and in particular the picture there given of his own family, as well as other contemporary glimpses of German domestic society in those days, are sufficient to show that much knowledge, much true cultivation of mind, much sound refinement of taste, were then distributed through the middle classes of German society; meaning by that very indeterminate expression those classes which for Frankfort composed the aristocracy, viz., all who had daily leisure, and regular funds for employing it to advantage. It is not necessary to add, because that is a fact applicable to all stages of society, that Frankfort presented many and various specimens of original talent, moving upon all directions of human speculation.

Yet, with this general allowance made for the capacities of the place, it is too evident that, for the most part, they lay inert and undeveloped. In many respects Frankfort resembled an English cathedral city, according to the standard of such places seventy years ago, not, that is to say, like Carlisle in this day, where a considerable manufacture exists, but like Chester as it is yet. The chapter of a cathedral, the resident ecclesiastics attached to the duties of so large an establishment, men always well educated, and generally having families, compose the original *nucleus*, around which soon gathers all that part of the local gentry who, for any purpose, whether of education for their children, or of social enjoyment for themselves, seek the advantages of a town. Hither resort all the timid old ladies who wish for conversation, or other forms

of social amusement; hither resort the valetudinarians, male or female, by way of commanding superior medical advice at a cost not absolutely ruinous to themselves; and multitudes besides, with narrow incomes, to whom these quiet retreats are so many cities of refuge.

Such, in one view, they really are; and yet in another they have a vicious constitution. Cathedral cities in England, imperial cities without manufactures in Germany, are all in an improgressive condition. The public employments of every class in such places continue the same from generation to generation. The amount of superior families oscillates rather than changes; that is, it fluctuates within fixed limits; and, for all inferior families, being composed either of shopkeepers or of menial servants, they are determined by the number, or, which, on a large average, is the same, by the pecuniary power, of their employers. Hence it arises, that room is made for one man, in whatever line of dependence, only by the death of another; and the constant increments of the population are carried off into other cities. Not less is the difference of such cities as regards the standard of manners: how striking is the soft and urbane tone of the lower orders in a cathedral city, or in a watering-place dependent upon ladies, contrasted with the bold, often insolent, demeanour of a self-dependent artizan or mutinous mechanic of Manchester and Glasgow.

Children, however, are interested in the state of society around them chiefly as it affects their parents. Those of Goethe were respectable, and perhaps tolerably representative of the general condition in their own rank. An English authoress of great talent, in her "Characteristics

of Goethe," has too much countenanced the notion that he owed his intellectual advantages exclusively to his mother. Of this there is no proof. His mother wins more esteem from the reader of this day, because she was a cheerful woman, of serene temper, brought into advantageous comparison with a husband much older than herself, whom circumstances had rendered moody, fitful, sometimes capricious, and confessedly obstinate in that degree which Pope has taught us to think connected with inveterate error:

Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong,

unhappily presents an association too often actually occurring in nature, to leave much chance for error in presuming either quality from the other. And, in fact, Goethe's father was so uniformly obstinate in pressing his own views upon all who belonged to him, whenever he did come forward in an attitude of activity, that his family had much reason to be thankful for the rarity of such displays. Fortunately for them, his indolence neutralised his obstinacy. And the worst shape in which his troublesome temper showed itself, was in what concerned the religious reading of the family. Once begun, the worst book as well as the best, the longest no less than the shortest, was to be steadfastly read through to the last word of the last volume; no excess of yawning availed to obtain a reprieve,—not, adds his son, though he were himself the leader of the yawners. As an illustration, he mentions Bowyer's "History of the Popes;" which awful series of records, the catacombs, as it were, in the palace of history, were actually traversed from one end to the other of the

endless *suite* by the unfortunate house of Goethe. Allowing, however, for the father's unamiableness in this one point, upon all intellectual ground both parents seem to have met very much upon a level. Two illustrations may suffice, one of which occurred during the infancy of Goethe. The science of education was at that time making its first rude motions towards an ampler development; and, amongst other reforms then floating in the general mind, was one for eradicating the childish fear of ghosts, &c. The young Goethes, as it happened, slept not in separate beds only, but in separate rooms; and not unfrequently the poor children, under the stinging terrors of their lonely situation, stole away from their "forms," to speak in the hunter's phrase, and sought to rejoin each other. But in these attempts they were liable to surprises from the enemy; papa and mamma were both on the alert, and often intercepted the young deserter by a cross march or an ambuscade; in which cases each had a separate policy for enforcing obedience. The father, upon his general system of "perseverance," compelled the fugitive back to his quarters, and, in effect, exhorted him to persist in being frightened out of his wits. To his wife's gentle heart that course appeared cruel, and she reclaimed the delinquent by bribes; the peaches which her garden walls produced being the fund from which she chiefly drew her supplies for this branch of the secret service. What were her winter bribes when the long nights would seem to lie heaviest on the exchequer, is not said. Speaking seriously, no man of sense can suppose that a course of suffering from terrors the most awful, under whatever influence supported, whether under the naked force of

compulsion, or of *that* connected with bribes, could have any final effect in mitigating the passion of awe, connected, by our very dreams, with the shadowy and the invisible, or in tranquillizing the infantine imagination.

A second illustration involves a great moral event in the history of Goethe, as it was, in fact, the first occasion of his receiving impressions at war with his religious creed. Piety is so beautiful an ornament of the youthful mind, doubt or distrust so unnatural a growth from confiding innocence, that an infant freethinker is heard of not so much with disgust as with perplexity. A sense of the ludicrous is apt to intermingle; and we lose our natural horror of the result in wonder at its origin. Yet in this instance there is no room for doubt; the fact and the occasion are both on record; there can be no question about the date; and, finally, the accuser is no other than the accused. Goethe's own pen it is which proclaims, that already, in the early part of his seventh year, his reliance upon God as a moral governor had suffered a violent shock—was shaken, if not undermined. On the 1st of November 1755 occurred the great earthquake at Lisbon. Upon a double account, this event occupied the thoughts of all Europe for an unusual term of time; both as an expression upon a larger scale than usual of the mysterious physical agency concerned in earthquakes, and also for the awful human tragedy* which attended either the earth-

* Of this no picture can ever hope to rival that hasty one sketched in the letter of the chaplain to the Lisbon factory. The plague of Athens as painted by Thucydides or Lucretius, nay even the fabulous plague of London by De Foe, contain no scenes or situations equal in effect to some in this plain historic statement.

quake itself, or its immediate sequel in the sudden irruption of the Tagus. Sixty thousand persons, victims to the dark power in its first or its second *avatar*, attested the Titanic scale upon which it worked. Here it was that the shallow piety of the Germans found a stumbling-block. Those who have read any circumstantial history of the physical signs which preceded this earthquake, are aware that in England and Northern Germany many singular phenomena were observed, more or less manifestly connected with the same dark agency which terminated at Lisbon, and running before this final catastrophe at times so accurately varying with the distances, as to furnish something like a scale for measuring the velocity with which it moved. These German phenomena, circulated rapidly over all Germany by the journals of every class, had seemed to give to the Germans a nearer and more domestic interest in the great event than belonged to them merely in their universal character of humanity. It is also well known to observers of national characteristics, that amongst the Germans the household charities, the *pieties of the hearth*, as they may be called, exist, if not really in greater strength, yet with much less of the usual balances or restraints. A German father, for example, is like the grandfather of other nations; and thus a piety, which in its own nature scarcely seems liable to excess, takes, in its external aspect, too often an air of effeminate imbecility. These two considerations are necessary to

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Nay, it would perhaps be difficult to produce a passage from Ezekiel, from Æschylus, or from Shakspeare, which would so profoundly startle the sense of sublimity as one or two of his incidents.

explain the intensity with which this Lisbon tragedy laid hold of the German mind, and chiefly under the one single aspect of its *undistinguishing* fury. Women, children, old men,—these, doubtless, had been largely involved in the perishing sixty thousand; and that reflection, it would seem from Goethe's account, had so far embittered the sympathy of the Germans with their distant Portuguese brethren, that, in the Frankfort discussions, sullen murmurs had gradually ripened into bold impeachments of Providence. There can be no gloomier form of infidelity than that which questions the moral attributes of the Great Being in whose hands are the final destinies of us all. Such, however, was the form of Goethe's earliest scepticism, such its origin; caught up from the very echoes which rang through the streets of Frankfort when the subject occupied all men's minds: and such, for anything that appears, continued to be its form thenceforwards to the close of his life, if speculations so crude could be said to have any form at all. Many are the analogies, some close ones, between England and Germany with regard to the circle of changes they have run through, political or social, for a century back. The challenges are frequent to a comparison; and sometimes the result would be to the advantage of Germany, more often to ours. But in religious philosophy, which in reality is the true *popular* philosophy, how vast is the superiority on the side of this country! Not a shopkeeper or mechanic, we may venture to say, but would have felt this obvious truth, that surely the Lisbon earthquake yielded no fresh lesson, no peculiar moral, beyond what belonged to every man's experience in every age. A passage in the New Testa-

ment about the fall of the tower of Siloam, and the just construction of that event, had already anticipated the difficulty, if such it could be thought. Not to mention, that calamities upon the same scale in the earliest age of Christianity, the fall of the amphitheatre at Fidenæ, or the destruction of Pompeii, had presented the same problem as the Lisbon earthquake. Nay, it is presented daily in the humblest individual case, where wrong is triumphant over right, or innocence confounded with guilt in one common disaster. And that the parents of Goethe should have authorized his error, if only by their silence, argues a degree of ignorance in them which could not have co-existed with much superior knowledge in the public mind.

Goethe, in his Memoirs (book vi.), commends his father for the zeal with which he superintended the education of his children. But apparently it was a zeal without knowledge. Many things were taught imperfectly, but all casually, and as chance suggested them. Italian was studied a little, because the elder Goethe had made an Italian tour, and had collected some Italian books, and engravings by Italian masters. Hebrew was studied a little, because Goethe the son had a fancy for it, partly with a view to theology, and partly because there was a Jewish quarter, gloomy and sequestrated, in the city of Frankfort. French offered itself no doubt on many suggestions, but originally on occasion of a French theatre, supported by the staff of the French army when quartered in the same city. Latin was gathered in a random way from a daily sense of its necessity. English upon the temptation of a stranger's advertisement, promising upon

moderate terms to teach that language in four weeks,—a proof, by the way, that the system of bold innovations in the art of tuition had already commenced. Riding and fencing were also attempted under masters apparently not very highly qualified, and in the same desultory style of application. Dancing was taught to his family, strange as it may seem, by Mr Goethe himself. There is good reason to believe that not one of all these accomplishments was possessed by Goethe, when ready to visit the university, in a degree which made it practically of any use to him. Drawing and music were pursued confessedly as amusements; and it would be difficult to mention any attainment whatsoever which Goethe had carried to a point of excellence in the years which he spent under his father's care, unless it were his mastery over the common artifices of metre and the common topics of rhetoric, which fitted him for writing what are called occasional poems and *impromptus*. This talent he possessed in a remarkable degree, and at an early age; but he owed its cultivation entirely to himself.

In a city so orderly as Frankfort, and in a station privileged from all the common hardships of poverty, it can hardly be expected that many incidents should arise, of much separate importance in themselves, to break the monotony of life; and the mind of Goethe was not contemplative enough to create a value for common occurrences through any peculiar impressions which he had derived from them. In the years 1763 and 1764, when he must have been from fourteen to fifteen years old, Goethe witnessed the inauguration and coronation of a king of the Romans, a solemn spectacle connected by

prescription with the city of Frankfort. He describes it circumstantially, but with very little feeling, in his "Memoirs." Probably the prevailing sentiment, on looking back at least to this transitory splendour of dress, processions, and ceremonial forms, was one of cynical contempt. But this he could not express, as a person closely connected with a German court, without giving much and various offence. It is with some timidity even that he hazards a criticism upon single parts of the costume adopted by some of the actors in that gorgeous scene. White silk stockings, and pumps of the common form, he objects to as out of harmony with the antique and heraldic aspects of the general costume, and ventures to suggest either boots or sandals as an improvement. Had Goethe felt himself at liberty from all restraints of private consideration in composing these "Memoirs," can it be doubted that he would have taken his retrospect of this Frankfort inauguration from a different station; from the station of that stern revolution which, within his own time, and partly under his own eyes, had shattered the whole imperial system of thrones, in whose equipage this gay pageant made so principal a figure, had humbled Cæsar himself to the dust, and left him an emperor without an empire. We at least, for our parts, could not read without some emotion one little incident of these gorgeous scenes recorded by Goethe, namely, that when the emperor, on rejoining his wife for a few moments, held up to her notice his own hands and arms arrayed in the antique habiliments of Charlemagne, Maria Theresa—she whose children were summoned to so sad a share in the coming changes—gave way to sudden bursts of loud

laughter, audible to the whole populace below her. That laugh on surveying the departing pomps of Charlemagne, must, in any contemplative ear, have rung with a sound of deep significance, and with something of the same effect which belongs to a figure of Death introduced by a painter, as mixing in the festal dances of a bridal assembly.

These pageants of 1763–64 occupy a considerable space in Goethe's "Memoirs," and with some *logical* propriety at least, in consideration of their being exclusively attached to Frankfort, and connected by manifold links of person and office with the privileged character of the city. Perhaps he might feel a sort of narrow local patriotism in recalling these scenes to public notice by description, at a time when they had been irretrievably extinguished as realities. But, after making every allowance for their local value to a Frankfort family, and for their memorable splendour, we may venture to suppose that by far the most impressive remembrances which had gathered about the boyhood of Goethe, were those which pointed to Frederick of Prussia. This singular man, so imbecile as a pretender to philosophy and new lights, so truly heroic under misfortunes, was the first German who created a German interest, and gave a transient unity to the German name under all its multiplied divisions. Were it only for this conquest of difficulties so peculiar, he would deserve his German designation of Fred. the Unique (*Fritz der einzige*). He had been partially tried and known previously; but it was the Seven Years' War which made him the popular idol. This began in 1756; and to Frankfort, in a very peculiar way, that war brought

dissensions and heart-burnings in its train. The imperial connections of the city with many public and private interests, pledged it to the anti-Prussian cause. It happened also that the truly German character of the reigning imperial family, the domestic habits of the empress and her young daughters, and other circumstances, were of a nature to endear the ties of policy: self interest and affection pointed in the same direction. And yet were all these considerations allowed to melt away before the brilliant qualities of one man, and the romantic enthusiasm kindled by his victories. Frankfort was divided within herself; the young and the generous were all dedicated to Frederick: a smaller party, more cautious and prudent, were for the imperialists. Families were divided upon this question against families, and often against themselves; feuds, begun in private, issued often into public violence; and, according to Goethe's own illustration, the streets were vexed by daily brawls, as hot and as personal as of old between the Capulets and Montagues.

These dissensions, however, were pursued with not much personal risk to any of the Goethes, until a French army passed the Rhine as allies of the imperialists. One corps of this force took up their quarters in Frankfort; and the Comte Thorane, who held a high appointment on the staff, settled himself for a long period of time in the spacious mansion of Goethe's father. This officer, whom his place made responsible for the discipline of the army in relation to the citizens, was naturally by temper disposed to moderation and forbearance. He was indeed a favourable specimen of French military officers under

the old system; well bred, not arrogant, well informed, and a friend of the fine arts. For painting, in particular, he professed great regard and some knowledge. The Goethes were able to forward his views amongst German artists; whilst, on the other hand, they were pleased to have thus an opportunity of directing his patronage towards some of their own needy connections. In this exchange of good offices, the two parties were for some time able to maintain a fair appearance of reciprocal good will. This on the Comte's side, if not particularly warm, was probably sincere; but in Goethe the father it was a mask for inveterate dislike. A natural ground of this existed in the original relations between them. Under whatever disguise or pretext, the Frenchman was in fact a military intruder: he occupied the best suite of rooms in the house, used the furniture as his own; and, though upon private motives he abstained from doing all the injury which his situation authorized (so as, in particular, to have spread his fine military maps upon the floor, rather than disfigure the decorated walls by nails), still he claimed credit, if not services of requital, for all such instances of forbearance. Here were grievances enough; but, in addition to these, the Comte's official appointments drew upon him a weight of daily business, which kept the house in a continual uproar. Farewell to the quiet of a literary amateur, and the orderliness of a German household. Finally, the Comte was a Frenchman. These were too many assaults upon one man's patience. It will be readily understood, therefore, how it happened, that, whilst Goethe's gentle-minded mother, with her flock of children, continued to be on the best terms with Comte

Thorane, the master of the house kept moodily aloof, and retreated from all intercourse.

Goethe, in his own Memoir, enters into large details upon this subject; and from him we shall borrow the *dénouement* of the tale. A crisis had for some time been lowering over the French affairs in Frankfort; things seemed ripening for a battle; and at last it came. Flight, siege, bombardment, possibly a storm, all danced before the eyes of the terrified citizens. Fortunately, however, the battle took place at the distance of four or five miles from Frankfort. Monsieur le Comte was absent, of course, on the field of battle. His unwilling host thought that on such an occasion he also might go out in quality of spectator; and with this purpose he connected another, worthy of a Parson Adams. It is his son who tells the story, whose filial duty was not proof against his sense of the ludicrous. The old gentleman's hatred of the French had by this time brought him over to his son's admiration of the Prussian hero. Not doubting for an instant that victory would follow that standard, he resolved on this day to offer in person his congratulations to the Prussian army, whom he already viewed as his liberator from a domestic nuisance. So purposing, he made his way cautiously to the suburbs; from the suburbs, still listening at each advance, he went forward to the country; totally forgetting, as his son insists, that, however completely beaten, the French army must still occupy some situation or other between himself and his German deliverer. Coming, however, at length to a heath, he found some of those marauders usually to be met with in the rear of armies, prowling about, and at intervals amusing

themselves with shooting at a mark. For want of a better, it seemed not improbable that a large German head might answer their purpose: certain signs admonished him of this, and the old gentleman crept back to Frankfort. Not many hours after came back also the Comte. By no means creeping, however; on the contrary, crowing with all his might for a victory which he averred himself to have won. There had in fact been an affair, but on no very great scale, and with no distinguished results. Some prisoners, however, he brought, together with some wounded; and naturally he expected all well disposed persons to make their compliments of congratulation upon his triumph. Of this duty poor Mrs Goethe and her children cheerfully acquitted themselves that same night; and Monsieur le Comte was so well pleased with the sound opinions of the little Goethes, that he sent them in return a collection of sweatmeats and fruits. All promised to go well; intentions, after all, are not acts; and there certainly is not, nor ever was, any treason in taking a morning's walk. But, as ill luck would have it, just as Mr Goethe was passing the Comte's door, out came the Comte in person, purely by accident, as we are told; but we suspect that the surly old German, either under his morning hopes or his evening disappointments, had talked with more frankness than prudence. "Good evening to you, Herr Goethe," said the Comte; "you are come, I see, to pay your tribute of congratulation. Somewhat of the latest, to be sure; but no matter." "By no means," replied the German; "by no means; *mit nichten.* Heartily I wished, the whole day long, that you and your cursed gang might all go to the devil together." Here

was plain speaking, at least. The Comte Thorane could no longer complain of dissimulation. His first movement was to order an arrest; and the official interpreter of the French army took to himself the whole credit that he did not carry it into effect. Goethe takes the trouble to report a dialogue, of length and dulness absolutely incredible, between this interpreter and the Comte. No such dialogue, we may be assured, ever took place. Goethe may, however, be right in supposing that, amongst a foreign soldiery, irritated by the pointed contrasts between the Frankfort treatment of their own wounded, and of their prisoners who happened to be in the same circumstances, and under a military council not held to any rigorous responsibility, his father might have found no very favourable consideration of his case. It is well, therefore, that after some struggle the Comte's better nature triumphed. He suffered Mrs Goethe's merits to outweigh her husband's delinquency; countermanded the order for arrest, and, during the remainder of their connection, kept at such a distance from his moody host as was equally desirable for both. Fortunately that remainder was not very long. Comte Thorane was soon displaced, and the whole army was soon afterwards withdrawn from Frankfort.

In his fifteenth year Goethe was entangled in some connection with young people of inferior rank, amongst whom was Margaret, a young girl about two years older than himself, and the object of his first love. The whole affair, as told by Goethe, is somewhat mysterious. What might be the final views of the elder parties it is difficult to say; but Goethe assures us that they used his services

only in writing an occasional epithalamium, the pecuniary acknowledgment for which was spent jovially in a general banquet. The magistrates, however, interfered, and endeavoured to extort a confession from Goethe: he, as the son of a respectable family, was to be pardoned; the others to be punished. No confession, however, could be extorted; and for his own part he declares that, beyond the offence of forming a clandestine connection, he had nothing to confess. The affair terminated, as regarded himself, in a severe illness. Of the others we hear no more.

The next event of importance in Goethe's life was his removal to college. His own wishes pointed to Göttingen, but his father preferred Leipsic. Thither accordingly he went, but he carried his obedience no farther. Declining the study of jurisprudence, he attached himself to general literature. Subsequently he removed to the university of Strasbourg; but in neither place could it be said that he pursued any regular course of study. His health suffered at times during this period of his life; at first from an affection of the chest, caused by an accident on his first journey to Leipsic; the carriage had stuck fast in the muddy roads, and Goethe exerted himself too much in assisting to extricate the wheels. A second illness connected with the digestive organs brought him into considerable danger.

After his return to Frankfort, Goethe commenced his career as an author. In 1773, and the following year, he made his maiden essay in "Goetz of Berlichingen," a drama (the translation of which, remarkably enough, was destined to be the literary *coup d'essai* of Sir Walter Scott), and in the far-famed "Werther." The first of these was

pirated; and in consequence the author found some difficulty in paying for the paper of the genuine edition, which part of the expense, by his contract with the publisher, fell upon himself. The general and early popularity of the second work is well known. Yet, except in so far as it might spread his name abroad, it cannot be supposed to have had much influence in attracting that potent patronage which now began to determine the course of his future life. So much we collect from the account which Goethe himself has left us of this affair in its earliest stages.

"I was sitting alone in my room," says he, "at my father's house in Frankfort, when a gentleman entered, whom at first I took for Frederick Jacobi, but soon discovered by the dubious light to be a stranger. He had a military air; and announcing himself by the name of Von Knebel, gave me to understand, in a short explanation, that being in the Prussian service, he had connected himself, during a long residence at Berlin and Potsdam, with the literati of those places; but that at present he held the appointment from the court of Weimar of travelling tutor to the Prince Constantine. This I heard with pleasure; for many of our friends had brought us the most interesting accounts from Weimar, in particular that the Duchess Amelia, mother of the young Grand Duke and his brother, summoned to her assistance in educating her sons the most distinguished men in Germany; and that the university of Jena co-operated powerfully in all her liberal plans. I was aware also that Wieland was in high favour; and that the German Mercury (a literary journal of eminence) was itself highly creditable to the city of Jena, from which it issued. A beautiful and well-conducted

theatre had besides, as I knew, been lately established at Weimar. This, it was true, had been destroyed; but that event, under common circumstances so likely to be fatal as respected the present, had served only to call forth the general expression of confidence in the young prince as a restorer and upholder of all great interests, and true to his purposes under any calamity." Thinking thus, and thus prepossessed in favour of Weimar, it was natural that Goethe should be eager to see the prince. Nothing was easier. It happened that he and his brother Constantine were at this moment in Frankfort, and Von Knebel willingly offered to present Goethe. No sooner said than done; they repaired to the hotel, where they found the illustrious travellers, with Count Goertz, the tutor of the elder.

Upon this occasion an accident, rather than any previous reputation of Goethe, was probably the determining occasion which led to his favour with the future sovereign of Weimar. A new book lay upon the table; that none of the strangers had read it, Goethe inferred from observing that the leaves were as yet uncut. It was a work of Moser ("Patriotische Phantasien"); and, being political rather than literary in its topics, it presented to Goethe, previously acquainted with its outline, an opportunity for conversing with the prince upon subjects nearest to his heart, and of showing that he was not himself a mere studious recluse. The opportunity was not lost; the prince and his tutor were much interested, and perhaps a little surprised. Such subjects have the further advantage, according to Goethe's own illustration, that, like the Arabian thousand and one nights, as conducted by the

Sultana Scheherezade, "never ending, still beginning," they rarely come to any absolute close, but so interweave one into another, as still to leave behind a large arrear of interest. In order to pursue the conversation, Goethe was invited to meet them soon after at Mentz. He kept the appointment punctually; made himself even more agreeable; and finally received a formal invitation to enter the service of this excellent prince, who was now beginning to collect around him all those persons who have since made Weimar so distinguished a name in connection with the German literature. With some opposition from his father, who held up the rupture between Voltaire and Frederick of Prussia as a precedent applying to all possible connections of princes and literati, Goethe accepted the invitation; and henceforwards, for upwards of fifty-five years, his fortunes were bound up with those of the ducal house of Weimar.

The noble part which that house played in the great modern drama of German politics is well known, and would have been better known had its power been greater. But the moral value of its sacrifices and its risks is not the less. Had greater potentates shown equal firmness, Germany would not have been laid at the feet of Napoleon. In 1806 the Grand Duke was aware of the peril which awaited the allies of Prussia; but neither his heart nor his conscience would allow of his deserting a friend in whose army he held a principal command. The decisive battle took place in his own territory, and not far from his own palace and city of Weimar. Personally he was with the Prussian army; but his excellent consort stayed in the palace to encourage her subjects, and as far as possible

to conciliate the enemy by her presence. The fortune of that great day, the 14th of October 1806, was decided early; and the awful event was announced by a hot retreat and a murderous pursuit through the streets of the town. In the evening Napoleon arrived in person; and now came the trying moment. "The Duchess," says an Englishman well acquainted with Weimar and its court, "placed herself on the top of the staircase to greet him with the formality of a courtly reception. Napoleon started when he beheld her: '*Qui êtes vous?*' he exclaimed, with characteristic abruptness. '*Je suis la Duchesse de Weimar.*' '*Je vous plains,*' he retorted fiercely. '*J'écraserai votre mari;*' he then added, 'I shall dine in my apartment,' and rushed by her. The night was spent on the part of the soldiery in all the horrid excesses of rapine. In the morning the Duchess sent to inquire concerning the health of his Majesty the Emperor, and to solicit an audience. He, who had now benefited by his dreams, or by his reflections, returned a gracious answer, and invited himself to breakfast with her in her apartment." In the conversation which ensued, Napoleon asked her if her husband were mad; upon which she justified the Duke by appealing to his own magnanimity, asking in her turn if his Majesty would have approved of his deserting the King of Prussia at the moment when he was attacked by so potent a monarch as himself. The rest of the conversation was in the same spirit, uniting with a sufficient concession to the circumstances of the moment a dignified vindication of a high-minded policy. Napoleon was deeply impressed with respect for her, and loudly expressed it. For her sake, indeed, he even

affected to pardon her husband, thus making a merit with her of the necessity which he felt, from other motives, for showing forbearance towards a family so nearly allied to that of St Petersburg. In 1813 the Grand Duke was found at his post in that great gathering of the nations which took place on the stupendous fields of Leipsic, and was complimented by the allied sovereigns as one of the most faithful amongst the faithful to the great cause, yet undecided, of national independence.

With respect to Goethe, as a councillor so near the Duke's person, it may be supposed that his presence was never wanting where it promised to be useful. In the earlier campaigns of the Duke, Goethe was his companion; but in the final contest with Napoleon he was unequal to the fatigues of such a post. In all the functions of peace, however, he continued to be a useful servant to the last, though long released from all official duties. Each had indeed most honourably earned the gratitude of the other. Goethe had surrendered the flower of his years and the best energies of his mind to the service of his serene master. On the other hand, that master had to him been at once his Augustus and his Mæcenas; such is his own expression. Under him he had founded a family, raised an estate, obtained titles and decorations from various courts; and in the very vigour of his life he had been allowed to retire, with all the honours of long service, to the sanctuary of his own study, and to the cultivation of his leisure, as the very highest mode in which he could further the public interest.

The life of Goethe was so quiet and so uniform after the year 1775, when he may first be said to have entered

into active life by taking service with the Duke of Weimar, that a biographer will find hardly any event to notice, except two journeys to Italy, and one campaign in 1792, until he draws near the close of his long career. It cannot interest an English reader to see the dates of his successive appointments. It is enough to know that they soon raised him to as high a station as was consistent with literary leisure; and that he had from the beginning enjoyed the unlimited confidence of his sovereign. Nothing remained, in fact, for the subject to desire which the prince had not previously volunteered. In 1825, they were able to look back upon a course of uninterrupted friendship, maintained through good and evil fortunes, unexampled in their agitation and interest, for fifty years. The Duke commemorated this remarkable event by a jubilee, and by a medal in honour of Goethe. Full of years and honour, this eminent man might now begin to think of his departure. However, his serenity continued unbroken nearly for two years more, when his illustrious patron died. That shock was the first which put his fortitude to trial. In 1830 others followed; the Duchess, who had won so much admiration from Napoleon, died; then followed his own son; and there remained little now to connect his wishes with the earth. The family of his patron he had lived to see flourishing in his descendants to the fourth generation. His own grandchildren were prosperous and happy. His intellectual labours were now accomplished. All that remained to wish for was a gentle dismission. This he found in the spring of 1832. After a six days' illness, which caused him no apparent suffering, on the morning of the 22d of March he breathed away as

if into a gentle sleep, surrounded by his daughter-in-law and her children. Never was a death more in harmony with the life it closed; both had the same character of deep and absolute serenity.

Such is the outline of Goethe's life, traced through its principal events. But as these events, after all, borrow their interest mainly from the consideration allowed to Goethe as an author, and as a model in the German literature—*that* being the centre about which all secondary feelings of interest in the man must finally revolve,—it thus becomes a duty to throw a glance over his principal works. Dismissing his songs, to which has been ascribed by some critics a very high value for their variety and their lyrical enthusiasm; dismissing also a large body of short miscellaneous poems, suited to the occasional circumstances in which they arose; we may throw the capital works of Goethe into two classes—philosophic novels, and dramas. The novels, which we call *philosophic* by way of expressing their main characteristic in being written to serve a preconceived purpose, or to embody some peculiar views of life, or some aspects of philosophic truth, are three, viz., the "Werther's Leiden;" secondly, the "Wilhelm Meister;" and lastly, the "Wahloer-wandschaften." The first two exist in English translations; and though the "Werther" had the disadvantage of coming to us through a French version, already, perhaps, somewhat coloured and distorted to meet the Parisian standards of sentiment, yet, as respects Goethe and his reputation amongst us, this wrong has been redressed, or compensated at least, by the good fortune of his "Wilhelm Meister," in falling into the hands of a translator whose

original genius qualified him for sympathizing even to excess with any real merits in that work. This novel is in its own nature and purpose sufficiently obscure; and the commentaries which have been written upon it by the Humboldts, Schlegels, &c., make the enigma still more enigmatical. We shall not venture abroad upon an ocean of discussion so truly dark, and at the same time so illimitable. Whether it be qualified to excite any deep and *sincere* feeling of one kind or another in the German mind,—in a mind trained under German discipline,—this we will consent to waive as a question not immediately interesting to ourselves. Enough that it has not gained, and will not gain, any attention in this country; and this not only because it is thoroughly deficient in all points of attraction to readers formed upon our English literature, but because in some capital circumstances it is absolutely repulsive. We do not wish to offend the admirers of Goethe; but the simplicity of truth will not allow us to conceal, that in various points of description or illustration, and sometimes in the very outline of the story, the "Wilhelm Meister" is at open war, not with decorum and good taste merely, but with moral purity and the dignity of human nature. As a novelist, Goethe and his reputation are problems, and likely to continue such, to the countrymen of Mrs Inchbald, Miss Harriet Lee, Miss Edgeworth, and Sir Walter Scott. To the dramatic works of Goethe we are disposed to pay more homage; but neither in the absolute amount of our homage at all professing to approach his public admirers, nor to distribute the proportions of this homage amongst his several performances according to the gradua-

tions of *their* scale. The "Iphigenie" is built upon the old subject of Iphigenia in Tauris, as treated by Euripides and other Grecian dramatists; and, if we are to believe a Schlegel, it is in beauty and effect a mere echo or reverberation from the finest strains of the old Grecian music. That it is somewhat nearer to the Greek model than a play after the fashion of Racine, we grant. Setting aside such faithful transcripts from the antique as the "Samson Agonistes," we might consent to view Goethe as that one amongst the moderns who had made the closest approximation to the Greek stage: *Proximus*, we might say with Quintilian, but with him we must add "*sed longo intervallo*;" and if in the second rank, yet nearer to the third than to the first. Two other dramas, the "Clavigo" and the "Egmont," fall below the "Iphigenie" by the very character of their pretensions; the first as too openly renouncing the grandeurs of the ideal; the second as confessedly violating the historic truth of character without temptation to do so, and without any consequent indemnification. The "Tasso" has been supposed to realize an Italian beauty of genial warmth and of sunny repose; but from the common defect of German criticism—the absence of all sufficient illustrations—it is as difficult to understand the true nature and constituents of the supposed Italian standard set up for the regulation of our judgments, as it is to measure the degree of approach made to that standard in this particular work. "Iphigenie" is celebrated for the artificial burnish of the style, but otherwise has been little relished. It has the beauty of marble sculpture, say the critics of Goethe, but also the coldness. We are not often disposed to quarrel with these critics as

below the truth in their praises; in this instance we are. The "Iphigenie" is a fragment, or (as Goethe himself called it in conversation) a *torso*, being only the first drama in a trilogy or series of three dramas, each having a separate plot, whilst all are parts of a more general and comprehensive plan. It may be charged with languor in the movement of the action, and with excess of illustration. Thus, *e.g*, the grief of the prince for the supposed death of his daughter, is the monotonous topic which occupies one entire act. But the situations, though not those of *scenical* distress, are so far from being unexciting, that, on the contrary, they are too powerfully afflicting.

The lustre of all these performances, however, is eclipsed by the unrivalled celebrity amongst German critics of the "Faust." Upon this it is better to say nothing than too little. How trifling an advance has been made towards clearing the ground for any sane criticism, may be understood from this fact, that as yet no two people have agreed about the meaning of any separate scene, or about the drift of the whole. Neither is this explained by saying, that until lately the "Faust" was a fragment; for no additional light has dawned upon the main question since the publication of the latter part.

One work there is of Goethe's which falls into neither of the classes here noticed; we mean the "Hermann and Dorothea," a narrative poem, in hexameter verse. This appears to have given more pleasure to readers not critical than any other work of its author; and it is remarkable that it traverses humbler ground, as respects both its subject, its characters, and its scenery. From this, and other indications of the same kind, we are disposed to

infer that Goethe mistook his destination; that his aspiring nature misled him; and that his success would have been greater had he confined himself to the *real* in domestic life, without raising his eyes to the *ideal*.

We must also mention, that Goethe threw out some novel speculations in physical science, and particularly in physiology, in the doctrine of colours, and in comparative anatomy, which have divided the opinions of critics even more than any of those questions which have arisen upon points more directly connected with his avowed character of poet.

It now remains to say a few words by way of summing up his pretensions as a man, and his intellectual power in the age to which he belonged. His rank and value as a moral being are so plain as to be legible to him who runs. Everybody must feel that his temperament and constitutional tendency was of that happy quality, the animal so nicely balanced with the intellectual, that with any ordinary measure of prosperity he could not be otherwise than a good man. He speaks himself of his own "virtue," *sans phrase;* and we tax him with no vanity in doing so. As a young man even at the universities, which at that time were barbarously sensual in Germany, he was (for so much we collect from his own Memoirs) eminently capable of self-restraint. He preserves a tone of gravity, of sincerity, of respect for female dignity, which we never find associated with the levity and recklessness of vice. We feel throughout, the presence of one who, in respecting others, respects himself; and the cheerfulness of the presiding tone persuades us at once that the narrator is in a healthy moral condition, fears no ill, and is conscious of having meditated

none. Yet, at the same time, we cannot disguise from ourselves that the moral temperament of Goethe was one which demanded prosperity: had he been called to face great afflictions, singular temptations, or a billowy and agitated course of life, our belief is that his nature would have been found unequal to the strife; he would have repeated the mixed and moody character of his father. Sunny prosperity was essential to his nature; his virtues were adapted to that condition. And happily that was his fate. He had no personal misfortunes; his path was joyous in this life; and even the reflex sorrow from the calamities of his friends did not press too heavily on his sympathies; none of these were in excess either as to degree or duration.

In this estimate of Goethe as a moral being, few people will differ with us, unless it were the religious bigot. And to him we must concede thus much, that Goethe was not that religious creature which by nature he was intended to become. This is to be regretted: Goethe was naturally pious, and reverential towards higher natures; and it was in the mere levity or wantonness of youthful power, partly also through that early false bias growing out of the Lisbon earthquake, that he falsified his original destination. Do we mean, then, that a childish error could permanently master his understanding? Not so; *that* would have been corrected with his growing strength. But having once arisen, it must for a long time have moulded his feelings; *until* corrected, it must have impressed a corresponding false bias upon his practical way of viewing things; and that sort of false bias, once established, might long survive a mere error of the under-

standing. One thing is undeniable. Goethe had so far corrupted and clouded his natural mind, that he did not look up to God, or the system of things beyond the grave, with the interest of reverence and awe, but with the interest of curiosity.

Goethe, however, in a moral estimate, will be viewed pretty uniformly. But Goethe intellectually, Goethe as a power acting upon the age in which he lived, that is another question. Let us put a case: suppose that Goethe's death had occurred fifty years ago, that is, in the year 1785, what would have been the general impression? Would Europe have felt a shock? Would Europe have been sensible even of the event? Not at all: it would have been obscurely noticed in the newspapers of Germany, as the death of a novelist who had produced some effect about ten years before. In 1832, it was announced by the post-horns of all Europe as the death of him who had written the "Wilhelm Meister," the "Iphigenie," and the "Faust," and who had been enthroned by some of his admirers on the same seat with Homer and Shakspeare, as composing what they termed the *trinity of men of genius*. And yet it is a fact, that, in the opinion of some amongst the acknowledged leaders of our own literature for the last twenty-five years, the "Werther" was superior to all which followed it, and for mere power was the paramount work of Goethe. For ourselves, we must acknowledge our assent upon the whole to this verdict; and at the same time we will avow our belief that the reputation of Goethe must decline for the next generation or two, until it reaches its just level. Three causes, we are persuaded, have concurred to push it so far

beyond the proportion of real and genuine interest attached to his works, for in Germany his works are little read, and in this country not at all.. *First*, his extraordinary age; for the last twenty years Goethe had been the patriarch of the German literature: *secondly*, the splendour of his official rank at the court of Weimar; he was the minister and private friend of the patriot sovereign amongst the princes of Germany: *thirdly*, the quantity of enigmatical and unintelligible writing which he has designedly thrown into his latter works, by way of keeping up a system of discussion and strife upon his own meaning amongst the critics of his country. These disputes, had his meaning been of any value in his own eyes, he would naturally have settled by a few authoritative words from himself: but it was his policy to keep alive the feud in a case where it was of importance that his name should continue to agitate the world, but of none at all that he should be rightly interpreted.

SCHILLER.

JOHN CHRISTOPHER FREDERICK VON SCHILLER was born at Marbach, a small town in the duchy of Würtemberg, on the 10th day of November 1759. It will aid the reader in synchronizing the periods of this great man's life with the corresponding events throughout Christendom, if we direct his attention to the fact, that Schiller's birth nearly coincided in point of time with that of Robert Burns, and that it preceded that of Napoleon by about ten years.

The position of Schiller is remarkable. In the land of his birth, by those who undervalue him the most, he is ranked as the second name in German literature; everywhere else he is ranked as the first. For us, who are aliens to Germany, Schiller is the representative of the German intellect in its highest form; and to him, at all events, whether first or second, it is certainly due, that the German intellect has become a known power, and a power of growing magnitude, for the great commonwealth of Christendom. Luther and Kepler, potent intellects as they were, did not make themselves known as Germans; the revolutionary vigour of the one, the starry lustre of the other, blended with the convulsions of reformation, or

with the aurora of ascending science, in too kindly and genial a tone to call off the attention from the work which they performed, from the service which they promoted, to the circumstances of their personal position. Their country, their birth, their abode, even their separate existence, was merged in the mighty cause to which they lent their co-operation. And thus at the beginning of the sixteenth century, thus at the beginning of the seventeenth, did the Titan sons of Germany defeat their own private pretensions by the very grandeur of their merits. Their interest as patriots was lost and confounded in their paramount interest as cosmopolites. What they did for man and for human dignity eclipsed what they had designed for Germany. After them there was a long interlunar period of darkness for the land of the Rhine and the Danube. The German energy, too spasmodically excited, suffered a collapse. Throughout the whole of the seventeenth century, but one vigorous mind arose for permanent effects in literature. This was Opitz, a poet who deserves even yet to be read with attention, but who is no more worthy to be classed as the Dryden whom his too partial countrymen have styled him, than the Germany of the Thirty Years' War of taking rank by the side of civilized and cultured England during the Cromwellian era, or Klopstock of sitting on the same throne with Milton. Leibnitz was the one sole potentate in the fields of intellect whom the Germany of this century produced; and he, like Luther and Kepler, impresses us rather as a European than as a German mind, partly perhaps from his having pursued his self-development in foreign lands, partly from his large circle of foreign connections, but

most of all from his having written chiefly in French or in Latin. Passing onwards to the eighteenth century, we find, through its earlier half, an absolute wilderness, unreclaimed and without promise of natural vegetation, as the barren arena on which the few insipid writers of Germany paraded. The torpor of academic dulness domineered over the length and breadth of the land. And as these academic bodies were universally found harnessed in the equipage of petty courts, it followed that the lethargies of pedantic dulness were uniformly deepened by the lethargies of aulic and ceremonial dulness; so that, if the reader represents to himself the very abstract of birthday odes, sycophantish dedications, and court sermons, he will have some adequate idea of the sterility and the mechanical formality which at that era spread the sleep of death over German literature. Literature, the very word literature, points the laughter of scorn to what passed under that name during the period of Gottsched. That such a man indeed as this Gottsched, equal at the best to the composition of a Latin grammar or a school arithmetic, should for a moment have presided over the German muses, stands out as in itself a brief and significant memorial, too certain for contradiction, and yet almost too gross for belief, of the apoplectic sleep under which the mind of central Europe at that era lay oppressed. The rust of disuse had corroded the very principles of activity. And, as if the double night of academic dulness, combined with the dulness of court inanities, had not been sufficient for the stifling of all native energies, the feebleness of French models (and of these moreover naturalized through still feebler imita-

tions) had become the law and standard for all attempts at original composition. The darkness of night, it is usually said, grows deeper as it approaches the dawn; and the very enormity of that prostration under which the German intellect at this time groaned, was the most certain pledge to any observing eye of that intense re-action soon to stir and kindle among the smouldering activities of this spell-bound people. This re-action, however, was not abrupt and theatrical: it moved through slow stages and by equable gradations: it might be said to commence from the *middle* of the eighteenth century, that is, about nine years before the birth of Schiller; but a progress of forty years had not carried it so far towards its meridian altitude, as that the sympathetic shock from the French Revolution was by one fraction more rude and shattering than the public torpor still demanded. There is a memorable correspondency throughout all members of Protestant Christendom in whatsoever relates to literature and intellectual advance. However imperfect the organization which binds them together, it was sufficient even in these elder times to transmit reciprocally from one to every other, so much of that illumination which could be gathered into books, that no Christian state could be much in advance of another, supposing that Popery opposed no barriers to free communication, unless only in those points which depended upon local gifts of nature, upon the genius of a particular people, or upon the excellence of its institutions. These advantages were incommunicable, let the freedom of intercourse have been what it might: England could not send off by posts or by heralds her iron and coals; she could not send the indomitable

energy of her population; she could not send the absolute security of property; she could not send the good faith of her parliaments. These were gifts indigenous to herself, either through the temperament of her people, or through the original endowments of her soil. But her condition of moral sentiment, her high-toned civic elevation, her atmosphere of political feeling and popular boldness,—much of these she could and did transmit, by the radiation of the press, to the very extremities of the German empire. Not only were our books translated, but it is notorious to those acquainted with German novels, or other pictures of German society, that as early as the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), in fact, from the very era when Cave and Dr Johnson first made the parliamentary debates accessible to the English themselves, most of the German journals repeated, and sent forward as by telegraph, these senatorial displays to every village throughout Germany. From the polar latitudes to the Mediterranean, from the mouths of the Rhine to the Euxine, there was no other exhibition of free deliberative eloquence in any popular assembly. And the "Luise" of Voss alone, a metrical idyll not less valued for its truth of portraiture than our own "Vicar of Wakefield," will show that the most sequestered clergyman of a rural parish did not think his breakfast equipage complete without the latest report from the great senate that sat in London. Hence we need not be astonished that German and English literature were found by the French Revolution in pretty nearly the same condition of semi-vigilance and imperfect animation. That mighty event reached us both, reached us all, we may say (speaking of Protestant states),

at the same moment, by the same tremendous galvanism. The snake, the intellectual snake, that lay in ambush among all nations, roused itself, sloughed itself, renewed its youth, in all of them at the same period. A new world opened upon us all; new revolutions of thought arose; new and nobler activities were born; "and other palms were won."

But by and through Schiller it was, as its main organ, that this great revolutionary impulse expressed itself. Already, as we have said, not less than forty years before the earthquake by which France exploded and projected the scoria of her huge crater over all Christian lands, a stirring had commenced among the dry bones of intellectual Germany; and symptoms arose that the breath of life would soon disturb, by nobler agitations than by petty personal quarrels, the death-like repose even of the German universities. Precisely in those bodies however it was, in those as connected with tyrannical governments, each academic body being shackled to its own petty centre of local despotism, that the old spells remained unlinked; and to them, equally remarkable as firm trustees of truth and as obstinate depositories of darkness or of superannuated prejudice, we must ascribe the slowness of the German movement on the path of reascent. Meantime the earliest torch-bearer to the murky literature of this great land, this crystallisation of political states, was Bodmer. This man had no demoniac genius, such as the service required; but he had some taste, and, what was better, he had some sensibility. He lived among the Alps; and his reading lay among the alpine sublimities of Milton and Shakspeare. Through his very eyes he

imbibed a daily scorn of Gottsched and his monstrous compound of German coarseness with French sensual levity. He could not look at his native Alps, but he saw in them, and their austere grandeurs or their dread realities, a spiritual reproach to the hollowness and falsehood of that dull imposture which Gottsched offered by way of substitute for nature. He was taught by the Alps to crave for something nobler and deeper. Bodmer, though far below such a function, rose by favour of circumstances into an apostle or missionary of truth for Germany. He translated passages of English literature. He inoculated with his own sympathies the more fervent mind of the youthful Klopstock, who visited him in Switzerland. And it soon became evident that Germany was not dead, but sleeping; and once again, legibly for any eye, the pulses of life began to play freely through the vast organisation of central Europe.

Klopstock, however, though a fervid, a religious, and for that reason an anti-Gallican mind, was himself an abortion. Such at least is our own opinion of this poet. He was the child and creature of enthusiasm, but of enthusiasm not allied with a masculine intellect, or any organ for that capacious vision and meditative range which his subjects demanded. He was essentially thoughtless, betrays everywhere a most effeminate quality of sensibility, and is the sport of that pseudo-enthusiasm and baseless rapture which we see so often allied with the excitement of strong liquors. In taste, or the sense of proportions and congruences, or the harmonious adaptations, he is perhaps the most defective writer extant.

But if no patriarch of German literature, in the sense

of having shaped the moulds in which it was to flow, in the sense of having disciplined its taste or excited its rivalship by classical models of excellence, or raised a finished standard of style, perhaps we must concede that, on a minor scale, Klopstock did something of that service in every one of these departments. His works were at least Miltonic in their choice of subjects, if ludicrously non-Miltonic in their treatment of those subjects. And, whether due to him or not, it is undeniable that in his time the mother-tongue of Germany revived from the most absolute degradation on record, to its ancient purity. In the time of Gottsched, the authors of Germany wrote a macaronic jargon, in which French and Latin made up a considerable proportion of every sentence: nay, it happened often that foreign words were inflected with German forms; and the whole result was such as to remind the reader of the medical examination in the "Malade Imaginaire" of Molière:

Quid poetea est à faire?
Saignare
Baignare
Ensuita purgare, &c.

Now it is reasonable to ascribe some share in the restoration of good to Klopstock, both because his own writings exhibit nothing of this most abject euphuism (a euphuism expressing itself not in fantastic refinements on the staple of the language, but altogether in rejecting it for foreign words and idioms), and because he wrote expressly on the subject of style and composition.

Wieland, meantime, if not enjoying so intense an acceptation as Klopstock, had a more extensive one; and it is

in vain to deny him the praise of a festive, brilliant, and most versatile wit. The Schlegels showed the haughty malignity of their ungenerous natures, in depreciating Wieland, at a time when old age had laid a freezing hand upon the energy which he would once have put forth in defending himself. He was the Voltaire of Germany, and very much more than the Voltaire; for his romantic and legendary poems are above the level of Voltaire. But, on the other hand, he was a Voltaire in sensual impurity. To work, to carry on a plot, to affect his readers by voluptuous impressions,—these were the unworthy aims of Wieland; and though a good-natured critic would not refuse to make some allowance for a youthful poet's aberrations in this respect, yet the indulgence cannot extend itself to mature years. An old man corrupting his readers, attempting to corrupt them, or relying for his effect upon corruptions already effected in the purity of their affections, is a hideous object; and that must be a precarious influence indeed which depends for its durability upon the licentiousness of men. Wieland, therefore, except in parts, will not last as a national idol; but such he was nevertheless for a time.

Bürger wrote too little of any expansive compass to give the measure of his powers, or to found national impression; Lichtenberg, though a very sagacious observer, never rose into what can be called a *power*—he did not modify his age; yet these were both men of extraordinary talent, and Bürger a man of undoubted genius. On the other hand, Lessing was merely a man of talent, but of talent in the highest degree adapted to popularity. His very defects, and the shallowness of his philosophy, pro-

moted his popularity; and by comparison with the French critics on the dramatic or scenical proprieties, he is ever profound. His plummet, if not suited to the soundless depths of Shakspeare, was able ten times over to fathom the little rivulets of Parisian philosophy. This he did effectually, and thus unconsciously levelled the paths for Shakspeare, and for that supreme dominion which he has since held over the German stage, by crushing with his sarcastic shrewdness the pretensions of all who stood in the way. At that time, and even yet, the functions of a literary man were very important in Germany: the popular mind and the popular instinct pointed one way, those of the little courts another. Multitudes of little German states (many of which were absorbed since 1816 by the process of *mediatizing*) made it their ambition to play at keeping mimic armies in their pay, and to ape the greater military sovereigns, by encouraging French literature only, and the French language at their courts. It was this latter propensity which had generated the anomalous macaronic dialect, of which we have already spoken as a characteristic circumstance in the social features of literary Germany during the first half of the eighteenth century. Nowhere else, within the records of human follies, do we find a corresponding case in which the government and the patrician orders in the state, taking for granted, and absolutely postulating the utter worthlessness for intellectual aims of those in and by whom they maintained their own grandeur and independence, undisguisedly and even professedly sought to ally themseves with a foreign literature, foreign literati, and a foreign language. In this unexampled display of scorn for native resources, and the

consequent collision between the two principles of action, all depended upon the people themselves. For a time the wicked and most profligate contempt of the local governments for that native merit which it was their duty to evoke and to cherish, naturally enough produced its own justification. Like Jews or slaves, whom all the world have agreed to hold contemptible, the German literati found it hard to make head against so obstinate a prejudgment; and too often they became all that they were presumed to be. *Sint Mœcenates non deerunt, Flacce, Marones.* And the converse too often holds good—that when all who should have smiled scowl upon a man, he turns out the abject thing they have predicted. Where Frenchified Fredericks sit upon German thrones, it should not surprise us to see a crop of Gottscheds arise as the best fruitage of the land. But when there is any latent nobility in the popular mind, such scorn, by its very extremity, will call forth its own counteraction. It was perhaps good for Germany that a prince so eminent in one aspect as *Fritz der einziger*,* should put on record so emphatically his intense conviction, that no good thing could arise out of Germany. This creed was expressed by the quality of the French minds which he attracted to his court. The very refuse and dregs of the Parisian coteries satisfied his hunger for French garbage; the very offal of their shambles met the demand of his palate; even a Maupertuis, so long as he could produce a French baptismal certificate, was good enough to manufacture into

* "*Freddy the unique*;" which is the name by which the Prussians expressed their admiration of their martial and indomitable, though somewhat fantastic, king.

the president of a Berlin academy. Such scorn challenged a reaction: the contest lay between the thrones of Germany and the popular intellect, and the final result was inevitable. Once aware that they were insulted, once enlightened to the full consciousness of the scorn which trampled on them as intellectual and predestined Helots, even the mild-tempered Germans became fierce, and now began to aspire, not merely under the ordinary instincts of personal ambition, but with a vindictive feeling, and as conscious agents of retribution. It became a pleasure with the German author, that the very same works which elevated himself, wreaked his nation upon their princes, and poured retorted scorn upon their most ungenerous and unparental sovereigns. Already, in the reign of the martial Frederick, the men who put most weight of authority into his contempt of Germans,—Euler, the matchless Euler, Lambert, and Immanuel Kant,—had vindicated the pre-eminence of German mathematics. Already, in 1755, had the same Immanuel Kant, whilst yet a probationer for the chair of logic in a Prussian university, sketched the outline of that philosophy which has secured the admiration, though not the assent, of all men known and proved to have understood it, of all men able to state its doctrines in terms admissible by its disciples. Already, and even previously, had Haller, who wrote in German, placed himself at the head of the current physiology. And in the fields of science or of philosophy, the victory was already decided for the German intellect in competition with the French.

But the fields of literature were still comparatively barren. Klopstock was at least an anomaly; Lessing did

not present himself in the impassioned walks of literature; Herder was viewed too much in the exclusive and professional light of a clergyman; and, with the exception of John Paul Richter, a man of most original genius, but quite unfitted for general popularity, no commanding mind arose in Germany with powers for levying homage from foreign nations, until the appearance, as a great scenical poet, of Frederick Schiller.

The father of this great poet was Caspar Schiller, an officer in the military service of the Duke of Würtemberg. He had previously served as a surgeon in the Bavarian army; but on his final return to his native country of Würtemberg, and to the service of his native prince, he laid aside his medical character for ever, and obtained a commission as ensign and adjutant. In 1763, the peace of Paris threw him out of his military employment, with the nominal rank of captain. But, having conciliated the Duke's favour, he was still borne on the books of the ducal establishment; and, as a planner of ornamental gardens, or in some other civil capacity, he continued to serve His Serene Highness for the rest of his life.

The parents of Schiller were both pious, upright persons, with that loyal fidelity to duty, and that humble simplicity of demeanour towards their superiors, which is so often found among the unpretending natives of Germany. It is probable, however, that Schiller owed to his mother exclusively the preternatural endowments of his intellect. She was of humble origin, the daughter of a baker, and not so fortunate as to have received much education. But she was apparently rich in gifts of the heart and the understanding. She read poetry with de-

light; and through the profound filial love with which she had inspired her son, she found it easy to communicate her own literary tastes. Her husband was not illiterate, and had in mature life so laudably applied himself to the improvement of his own defective knowledge, that at length he thought himself capable of appearing before the public as an author. His book related simply to the subjects of his professional experience as a horticulturist, and was entitled "Die Baumzucht im Grossen" (On the Management of Forests). Some merit we must suppose it to have had, since the public called for a second edition of it long after his own death, and even after that of his illustrious son. And although he was a plain man, of no pretensions, and possibly even of slow faculties, he has left behind him a prayer, in which there is one petition of sublime and pathetic piety, worthy to be remembered by the side of Agar's wise prayer against the almost equal temptations of poverty and riches. At the birth of his son, he had been reflecting with sorrowful anxiety, not unmingled with self-reproach, on his own many disqualifications for conducting the education of the child. But at length, reading in his own manifold imperfections but so many reiterations of the necessity that he should rely upon God's bounty, converting his very defects into so many arguments of hope and confidence in heaven, he prayed thus:—"Oh God, that knowest my poverty in good gifts for my son's inheritance, graciously permit that, even as the want of bread became to thy Son's hunger-stricken flock in the wilderness the pledge of overflowing abundance, so likewise my darkness may, in its sad extremity, carry with it the measure of thy unfathomable

light; and because I, thy worm, cannot give to my son the least of blessings, do thou give the greatest; because in my hands there is not anything, do thou from thine pour out all things; and that temple of a new-born spirit, which I cannot adorn even with earthly ornaments of dust and ashes, do thou irradiate with the celestial adornment of thy presence, and finally with that peace that passeth all understanding."

Reared at the feet of parents so pious and affectionate, Schiller would doubtless pass a happy childhood; and probably to this utter tranquillity of his earlier years, to his seclusion from all that could create pain, or even anxiety, we must ascribe the unusual dearth of anecdotes from this period of his life,—a dearth which has tempted some of his biographers into improving and embellishing some puerile stories, which a man of sense will inevitably reject as too trivial for his gravity or too fantastical for his faith. That nation is happy, according to a common adage, which furnishes little business to the historian; for such a vacuity in facts argues a condition of perfect peace and silent prosperity. That childhood is happy, or may generally be presumed such, which has furnished few records of external experience, little that has appeared in doing or in suffering to the eyes of companions; for the child who has been made happy by early thoughtfulness, and by infantine struggles with the great ideas of his origin and his destination (ideas which settle with a deep, dove-like brooding upon the mind of childhood, more than of mature life, vexed with inroads from the noisy world), will not manifest the workings of his spirit by much of external activity. The *fallentis semita vitæ*,

that path of noiseless life, which eludes and deceives the conscious notice both of its subject and of all around him, opens equally to the man and to the child; and the happiest of all childhoods will have been that of which the happiness has survived and expressed itself, not in distinct records, but in deep affection, in abiding love, and the hauntings of meditative power.

Such a childhood, in the bosom of maternal tenderness, was probably passed by Schiller; and his first awaking to the world of strife and perplexity happened in his fourteenth year. Up to that period his life had been vagrant, agreeably to the shifting necessities of the ducal service, and his education desultory and domestic. But in the year 1773 he was solemnly entered as a member of a new academical institution, founded by the reigning duke, and recently translated to his little capital of Stuttgard. This change took place at the special request of the Duke, who, under the mask of patronage, took upon himself the severe control of the whole simple family. The parents were probably both too humble and dutiful in spirit towards one whom they regarded in the double light of sovereign lord and of personal benefactor, ever to murmur at the ducal behests, far less to resist them. The Duke was for them an earthly providence; and they resigned themselves, together with their child, to the disposal of him who dispensed their earthly blessings, not less meekly than of Him whose vicegerent they presumed him to be. In such a frame of mind, requests are but another name for commands; and thus it happened that a second change arose upon the first, even more determinately fatal to the young Schiller's happiness.

Hitherto he had cherished a day-dream pointing to the pastoral office in some rural district, as that which would harmonize best with his intellectual purposes, with his love of quiet, and, by means of its preparatory requirements, best also with his own peculiar choice of studies. But this scheme he now found himself compelled to sacrifice; and the two evils which fell upon him concurrently in his new situation were, first, the formal military discipline and monotonous routine of duty; secondly, the uncongenial direction of the studies, which were shaped entirely to the attainment of legal knowledge, and the narrow service of the local tribunals. So illiberal and so exclusive a system of education was revolting to the expansive mind of Schiller; and the military bondage under which this system was enforced, shocked the aspiring nobility of his moral nature, not less than the technical narrowness of the studies shocked his understanding. In point of expense, the whole establishment cost nothing at all to those parents who were privileged servants of the Duke: in this number were the parents of Schiller, and that single consideration weighed too powerfully upon his filial piety to allow of his openly murmuring at his lot; while on *their* part the parents were equally shy of encouraging a disgust which too obviously tended to defeat the promises of ducal favour. This system of monotonous confinement was therefore carried to its completion, and the murmurs of the young Schiller were either dutifully suppressed, or found vent only in secret letters to a friend. In one point only Schiller was able to improve his condition; jointly with the juristic department, was another for training young aspirants to the medical profession. To

this, as promising a more enlarged scheme of study, Schiller, by permission, transferred himself in 1775. But whatever relief he might find in the nature of his new studies, he found none at all in the system of personal discipline which prevailed.

Under the oppression of this detested system, and by pure reaction against its wearing persecutions, we learn from Schiller himself, that in his nineteenth year he undertook the earliest of his surviving plays, "The Robbers," beyond doubt the most tempestuous, the most volcanic we might say, of all juvenile creations anywhere recorded. He himself calls it "a monster," and a monster it is; but a monster which has never failed to convulse the heart of young readers with the temperament of intellectual enthusiasm and sensibility. True it is, and nobody was more aware of that fact than Schiller himself in after years, the characters of the three Moors, father and sons, are mere impossibilities; and some readers, in whom the judicious acquaintance with human life in its realities has outrun the sensibilities, are so much shocked by these hypernatural phenomena, that they are incapable of enjoying the terrific sublimities which on that basis of the visionary do really exist. A poet, perhaps Schiller might have alleged, is entitled to assume hypothetically so much in the previous positions or circumstances of his agents as is requisite to the basis from which he starts. It is undeniable that Shakspeare and others have availed themselves of this principle, and with memorable success. Shakspeare, for instance, *postulates* his witches, his Caliban, his Ariel: grant, he virtually says, such modes of spiritual existence or of spiritual relations as a possibility; do not expect me

to demonstrate this, and upon that single concession I will rear a superstructure that shall be self-consistent; everything shall be *internally* coherent and reconciled, whatever be its *external* relations as to our human experience. But this species of assumption, on the largest scale, is more within the limits of credibility and plausible verisimilitude when applied to modes of existence, which, after all, are in such total darkness to us (the limits of the possible being so undefined and shadowy as to what can or cannot exist), than the very slightest liberties taken with human character, or with those principles of action, motives, and feelings, upon which men would move under given circumstances, or with the modes of action which in common prudence they would be likely to adopt. The truth is, that, as a coherent work of art, the "Robbers" is indefensible; but, however monstrous it may be pronounced, it possesses a power to agitate and convulse, which will always obliterate its great faults to the young, and to all whose judgment is not too much developed. And the best apology for Schiller is found in his own words in recording the circumstances and causes under which this anomalous production arose. "To escape," says he, "from the formalities of a discipline which was odious to my heart, I sought a retreat in the world of ideas and shadowy possibilities, while as yet I knew nothing at all of that human world from which I was harshly secluded by iron bars. Of men, the actual men in this world below, I knew absolutely nothing at the time when I composed my "Robbers." Four hundred human beings, it is true, were my fellow-prisoners in this abode; but they were mere tautologies and reiterations of the self-same mechanic

creature, and like so many plaster casts from the same original statue. Thus situated, of necessity I failed. In making the attempt, my chisel brought out a monster, of which [and that was fortunate] the world had no type or resemblance to show."

Meantime this demoniac drama produced very opposite results to Schiller's reputation. Among the young men of Germany it was received with an enthusiasm absolutely unparalleled, though it is perfectly untrue that it excited some persons of rank and splendid expectations (as a current fable asserted) to imitate Charles Moor in becoming robbers. On the other hand, the play was of too powerful a cast not in any case to have alarmed his serenity the Duke of Würtemberg; for it argued a most revolutionary mind, and the utmost audacity of self-will. But besides this general ground of censure, there arose a special one, in a quarter so remote that this one fact may serve to evidence the extent as well as intensity of the impression made. The territory of the Grisons had been called by Spiegelberg, one of the robbers, "the Thief's Athens." Upon this the magistrates of that country presented a complaint to the Duke; and his Highness, having cited Schiller to his presence, and severely repri manded him, issued a decree that this dangerous young student should henceforth confine himself to his medical studies.

The persecution which followed exhibits such extraordinary exertions of despotism, even for that land of irresponsible power, that we must presume the Duke to have relied more upon the hold which he had upon Schiller through his affection for parents so absolutely dependent on his

Highness's power, than upon any laws, good or bad, which he could have pleaded as his warrant. Germany, however, thought otherwise of the new tragedy than the serene critic of Würtemberg: it was performed with vast applause at the neighbouring city of Mannheim; and thither, under a most excusable interest in his own play, the young poet clandestinely went. On his return he was placed under arrest. And soon afterwards, being now thoroughly disgusted, and, with some reason, alarmed by the tyranny of the Duke, Schiller finally eloped to Mannheim, availing himself of the confusion created in Stuttgard by the visit of a foreign prince.

At Mannheim he lived in the house of Dalberg, a man of some rank and of sounding titles, but in Mannheim known chiefly as the literary manager (or what is called director) of the theatre. This connection aided in determining the subsequent direction of Schiller's talents; and his "Fiesco," his "Intrigue and Love," his "Don Carlos," and his "Maria Stuart," followed within a short period of years. None of these are so far free from the faults of the "Robbers" as to merit a separate notice; for with less power, they are almost equally licentious. Finally, however, he brought out his "Wallenstein," an immortal drama, and, beyond all competition, the nearest in point of excellence to the dramas of Shakspeare. The position of the characters of Max. Piccolomini and the Princess Thekla is the finest instance of what, in a critical sense, is called *relief*, that literature offers. Young, innocent, unfortunate, among a camp of ambitious, guilty, and blood-stained men, they offer a depth and solemnity of impression which is equally required by way of contrast and of final repose.

From Mannheim, where he had a transient love affair with Laura Dalberg, the daughter of his friend the director, Schiller removed to Jena, the celebrated university in the territory of Weimar. The Grand Duke of that German Florence was at this time gathering around him the most eminent of the German intellects; and he was eager to enrol Schiller in the body of his professors. In 1799 Schiller received the chair of civil history; and not long after he married Miss Lengefeld, with whom he had been for some time acquainted. In 1803 he was ennobled; that is, he was raised to the rank of gentleman, and entitled to attach the prefix of *Von* to his name. His income was now sufficient for domestic comfort and respectable independence; while in the society of Goethe, Herder, and other eminent wits, he found even more relaxation for his intellect, than his intellect, so fervent and so self-sustained, could require.

Meantime the health of Schiller was gradually undermined; his lungs had been long subject to attacks of disease; and the warning indications which constantly arose of some deep-seated organic injuries in his pulmonary system ought to have put him on his guard for some years before his death. Of all men, however, it is remarkable that Schiller was the most criminally negligent of his health; remarkable, we say, because for a period of four years Schiller had applied himself seriously to the study of medicine. The strong coffee and the wine which he drank may not have been so injurious as his biographers suppose; but his habit of sitting up through the night, and defrauding his wasted frame of all

natural and restorative sleep, had something in it of that guilt which belongs to suicide. On the 9th of May 1805 his complaint reached its crisis. Early in the morning he became delirious; at noon his delirium abated; and at four in the afternoon he fell into a gentle unagitated sleep, from which he soon awoke. Conscious that he now stood on the very edge of the grave, he calmly and fervently took a last farewell of his friends. At six in the evening he fell again into sleep, from which, however, he again awoke once more to utter the memorable declaration, "that many things were growing plain and clear to his understanding." After this the cloud of sleep again settled upon him; a sleep which soon changed into the cloud of death.

This event produced a profound impression throughout Germany. The theatres were closed at Weimar, and the funeral was conducted with public honours. The position in point of time, and the peculiar services of Schiller to the German literature, we have already stated: it remains to add, that in person he was tall, and of a strong, bony structure, but not muscular, and strikingly lean. His forehead was lofty, his nose aquiline, and his mouth almost of Grecian beauty. With other good points about his face, and with auburn hair, it may be presumed that his whole appearance was pleasing and impressive, while in later years the character of sadness and contemplative sensibility deepened the impression of his countenance. We have said enough of his intellectual merit, which places him, in our judgment, at the head of the Trans-Rhenish literature. But we add, in concluding, that

Frederick von Schiller was something more than a great author; he was also in an eminent sense a great man; and his works are not more worthy of being studied for their singular force and originality, than his moral character from its nobility and aspiring grandeur.

A TORY'S ACCOUNT

OF

TORYISM, WHIGGISM, AND RADICALISM.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN BENGAL.*

NEVER yet did a great country more plainly stand in the circumstances of a crisis—vast, rapid, and decisive—than the England of 1835. So much is evident to you in India, as to us on the spot.

"England," you say, in one of your last letters, "stands, or seems to stand, on the threshold of great changes; nay—were it not that such a word is full of sorrow, and is, in a Roman sense, *abominable*—of great revolutions." And you ask, "Are the people of England aware of this?" Imperfectly, I believe, they are. In a spirit of hope, or of fear, according to their several positions, all men are now looking with intense interest upon the great political forces which are gathering and getting into motion amongst us; and with a certain anticipation of some portentous births in which they are to issue. There is no slackness

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* This article appeared in Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, December 1835 and January 1836.

of interest amongst us; but to some of us it seems that this interest is not of the right quality,—that it is too much an interest of curiosity, and as if attached to mere scenical changes. You remember the case of that Frenchman who, at an early stage of the French Revolution, wished earnestly for a prolongation of his life, on no higher interest than that of a novel reader,—in order, viz., to know "*how it would end.*" The novel had then advanced no farther than the second or third chapter: even the hero was doubtful; or, perhaps, he had not yet been introduced. We who live now are aware that, in fact, he had *not.* We have read the novel to its *dénouement;* and we know that the true hero of the French Revolution did not, in a proper sense, come forward until the year 1796. We have seen his rising, his culmination, and his setting; and the singular effect to us, from the utter abolition of the whole system which he created, and the perfect obliteration of its whole *personal* memorials, is—a sense of unreality, of phantom life, as if all had been no more than a gay pageantry in the clouds. This by the way.—But, returning to the Frenchman, *his* feeling was a natural one—yet surely unworthy of a patriotic heart, and below the dignity of the occasion. Ours is somewhat more mixed. We do not all look upon our prospects from this station of neutral curiosity: some of us have an interest of fear the profoundest; but it is the fear of fascination. The rattlesnake has his eye upon us, and has mastered our volitions. The times to us seem already pregnant with great events, which must, by a natural necessity, travel onward to the birth, whether the throes of labour be severe or light, and spite of all that *we* can offer of hin-

drances from without. Hence it is that we are all passive and acquiescent,—not in a spirit of sympathy or toleration, but of utter despondency and of hopeless abhorrence. There is but one powerful will amongst us, one indomitable will: Mr O'Connell, only, represents the absolute and the unconditional;—all others are temporisers, waiters upon occasion and opportunity, compromisers, oscillators. And, according to all human appearances, this one quality of demoniac energy, and a Titan strength of purpose, imperturbable and remorseless, will prevail,—will triumph finally over all opposition from mere talents, though they should be a thousand times superior; and over all interests, the plainest and the largest, that are not equally cemented into unity. In saying this, I judge upon a large basis of observation; and, more especially, I think myself entitled to draw an indication of the future from the sort of support lately given to Sir Robert Peel. Do I subscribe, then, to the partisan statements,—that the addresses to that minister were *hole-and-corner* addresses? Far from it. Seven or eight hundred addresses, bearing on an average twelve hundred signatures (which I have reason to think a moderate assumption), will represent the feelings of nearly a million male adults, or perhaps of eight hundred thousand families; deducting, therefore, four millions of the British population from the opponents of Sir Robert Peel's policy,—whilst, on the scale of respectability, whether tried by property or education, these four millions may stand over against all the rest of the nation, as an adequate and countervailing balance. But be that as it may,—whether less or more numerically, whether less or more in significance and value,—the sup-

port was not what it should have been. The earthly is ill-matched against the demoniac; neither can the blows of fanaticism be parried by weapons tempered in the armories of fear or of prudential caution. Therefore—if the past were at all to be relied upon as representative of the future—therefore, I should say, Despair! to all who partake my views. Hope there is none under such tactics, opposed to such an enemy.

But I come now to the business of my letter. You demand of me that I should give an account of my creed and profession as a Tory; that I should explain, as fully as possible, what *is* Toryism; what it has been generally understood to mean in past times, and what it means now; what are its relations to Whiggism; what are their joint relations to the new creed of Radicalism; and what are the several powers, pretensions, and prospects of all three, as governing principles of action amongst the people of England, and in the national councils.

The questions you have here proposed teem with confusions; many more have been artificially nursed or propagated by the press. On that subject, one word beforehand.

The newspapers, and other political journals of this country, are conducted with extraordinary talent,—with more, in fact, than was ever before applied in any nation to the same function of public teaching. Indeed, without talent of a high order, and without a variety of talent, it would be a mere impossibility that an English journal should sustain its existence. Perhaps it would be impossible to show any exception to the rule; unless in the rare case where a provincial newspaper has inherited, from

a past generation, a sort of monopoly, or privilege of precedency, as a depositary of advertisements. Advertisers go where they have been used to go, on a certain knowledge that readers interested in advertisements will, by a reciprocal necessity, go where advertisements are most sure to be found; and, therefore, a monopoly of this nature is most secure where it is most intense. But, allowing for this single exception, the political press of England has so much more than its fair proportion of natural talent that, for thirty years and upwards, it has even acted injuriously upon the literature of the country, by impressing too exclusive direction upon the marketable talent of the young and the aspiring. Other modes of intellectual exercise have been starved or impoverished, that this might flourish exorbitantly; and the result is, that never amongst men has there been an exhibition of so much energy, vigilance, sagacity, perseverance, as we of this day behold in our political press. This is our Briareus,—this is our sole Briareus. But their qualities of honour and good feeling do not keep pace with their ability. An American spirit of violence and brutality is gaining ground in our public press; and that is a spirit which soon diffuses itself. Even in private disputes, where one party is violent, personal, overbearing, rapid, and visibly on the fret to interrupt at every moment, the wisest and the coolest feel it difficult to resist the contagion of the case. My party, therefore, if it does not already, very soon *will* adopt the tone of its antagonists. At present, it seems to me that the violence which I complain of, the rancorous hatred, and the utter abolition of candour, are chiefly conspicuous amongst our opponents; and not

without adequate motives. The Tories are exposed to the combined attacks of Whigs and Radicals; whereas either of these parties has but a single enemy to face. Moreover, the Tories are the sole obstacle in the path of the Radicals. The Whigs are the objects of their contempt; the Whigs are in their grasp; that party cannot move a step, neither win nor retain office, nor carry any one great public measure, without the support of the Radicals,—or, in many cases, without the forbearance of the Tories. This is known on both sides: the tone of mortification and internal despondency is visible in every act of the Whigs,—the drooping tone of men trading confessedly upon other people's funds and other people's credit: whilst the Radicals wear the erect and cheerful air of men confident in their own resources; borrowing nothing, owing nothing; having no exposures to fear, no ultimate defeats to face; the sole question for them being, as to the particular point at which their victories will stop. Meantime, the Whigs wreak their embittered feelings upon us. For it cannot be denied that the Tories were they, who, by excluding the Whigs from office for half a century, drove them into the necessity of an alliance with the Radicals. The price paid down was the Reform Bill; and there the Whigs hoped to have stopped. But the Radicals have made them sensible that this is no more than a means; and, as a means, even not yet effectual without further amendments and collateral aids. These, and the whole train of ends to which the improved means will be applied, now open upon the gaze of the Whig party like the never-ending line of Banquo. Their co-operation will be exacted in the warfare at hand, upon

these great questions, down to the final battle. The Radicals know their allies: suspect them they do not; for the treachery, which is in their hearts, has been put on record by many overt acts in and out of Parliament, and is, besides, involved in their very circumstances as a part of the aristocracy. But, if they venture to act upon their secret wishes, to falter, or hang back,—then the Radicals know their power, and the instantaneousness of that absolute redress which they can apply. This existence for a party so properly *precarious*, hanging upon entreaty and sufferance, is humiliating. It is natural that this humiliation should revenge itself upon those who were indirectly the authors of it. As against the Whigs, therefore, I see no reason that the Tories should much complain of the scurrilities pointed at their name and party. But in the Radicals this tone has surprised me. Take, for instance, "The Examiner" newspaper. Two things I used to admire in that journal,—its extraordinary talent, and its integrity. This latter quality I am now compelled to doubt,—or, at least, I see that it is capable of descending to political tricks, and to what is commonly felt to be a mode of intriguing,—when I find him affecting a confidence in Whigs, and an exultation in their restoration to power, which his whole public existence proves that he cannot really entertain. It is convenient to dissemble at this moment; and he does so. But, formerly, I gave himself and his party credit for as little choosing as, in fact, they needed to dissemble. To him, I know that the difference between Whigs and Tories is as the difference between aristocratic anti-reformers, who disguise their principles, and who do not disguise

them. And, besides this general charge against "The Examiner," as irreconcilable with that high-minded candour and frankness which conscious strength enables his party to maintain, I complain of two other offences against that spirit of honour which he *might* profess:—1*st*, The adoption of that practice so common and excusable in lower journals, of ascribing to the Tory party, as principles, many rules of action which they would themselves universally disavow; 2*dly*, The habit of stating great public questions as lying between a party and the nation, when it is notorious that they lie between the nation and itself, as divided upon different principles, and in proportions which no man of sense would undertake to compute.

Now, addressing myself to this large question you have proposed, of Toryism, its nature and grounds, its several aspects, and its future fortunes, according to all present and apparent probabilities,—I shall begin by affirming that Toryism, in its widest sense, stands in three capital relations, perfectly distinct and independent: one permanent, which dates from its origin, and is co-essential with itself; one accidental, dating from the French Revolution; and one of recent birth, not accidental, but derivative, and arising in the way of inference from its own distinguishing principles. The first relation is that which Toryism bears to the British constitution, and which is otherwise expressed by its relation to Whiggism considered as a body of political principles. The second is that which Toryism bears to Whiggism, as a mode of partisanship or party policy; the modern aspects of which point chiefly to the French Revolution, and to the great

foreign questions arising out of that event. The third relation of Toryism is that which it bears to the new doctrines of Radical Reformers, or of that section amongst political men denominated the *Movement* party; and this relation is in no respect capricious, or matter of accident, inasmuch as it grows inevitably, and by way of logical deduction, from the differential principles of its own peculiar creed.

Great confusion, the very greatest, has arisen from neglecting to draw the line sharply between these several aspects of Toryism; and, were it only for the sake of accurate thinking, I might be excused for dwelling a little on these primary distinctions, and pointing your attention to the consequences which attend them in our practical judgments, whether upon things or persons. But, for the particular task which I have undertaken,—the task of unfolding, and also of valuing, the true meaning and tendencies of Toryism,—this preliminary attempt to clear the ground is a *conditio sine quâ non* towards any possible success. Many things are true of Toryism—or have a meaning, at least, when said of Toryism—in one phasis, which are false or inconsistent, or without a plausible sense, when said of it in another. Political rancour, indeed, and the blindness of partisanship in moments of strong excitement, are daily betraying men into a use of the term *Tory*, which defeats itself by the very enormity of its latitude. Nothing in human thought or action that happens to be odious to the writer of the moment, but is described as being traditionally "Tory,"—"Tory" by its essence, "Tory" by tendency or by prescription. And this license of use, which at length leaves the word with-

out any distinct meaning at all, is carried into such ludicrous extremities, that I have lately read in a London newspaper some alleged pre-occupation of horses and carriages by the party opposed to Lord John Russell in South Devon (baseless in all probability even as a fact), described as "an old Tory trick." The ingenious writer, it is very possible, looks upon ale and brandy, together with the suspicious art of drinking, as originally among the devices of Tory corruption. But graver abuses are practised upon this party term, and by more thoughtful writers. And the same sort of abuses, though not perhaps to the same extent, is practised upon the correlatives, *Whig* and *Radical:* all which abuses are chiefly facilitated by the shifting relations in which they stand; and best evaded by a chronological deduction of the words Whig and Tory from their earliest origin. It has been remarked, by a profound scholar, that the investigation of religious controversies is best pursued through a regular study of ecclesiastical history; and the same thing holds good of this political investigation. Its clearest historical deduction is the best logical account of its true genesis and its philosophic interpretation.

The British constitution, which had been unfolding and maturing itself for centuries, obtained its final expansion and its settlement in the seventeenth century. People are apt to forget that a *constitution*—by which I mean the equilibrium of forces in a political system, as recognised and fixed by distinct public acts—cannot advance faster than civilization: each is bound to the motions of the other; for the political forces cannot be adjusted to each other until those forces are finally developed. Now,

what great change was silently going on in this country throughout the Tudor reigns? What civil forces were then gradually evolving? These in particular: a new distribution of landed wealth, and a gentry. Upon the basis of two great changes—1*st*, The breaking down of the feudal aristocracy, by Henry VII.; 2*d*, The breaking down of the church aristocracy by his son—that mighty revolution* was effected for England in particular, which Harrington has propounded in his "Oceana" as universally the determining ground of power. Civil power and its equilibrium, says Harrington, is determined solely by the distribution of the landed balance; where *that* is placed, there is placed the power. Gradually, therefore, the power, because gradually the land, had been slipping down from the hands of the high nobility and the church, where originally it was concentrated, into those of a new order, having new political relations,—viz., a gentry. This class was chiefly a growth of the Tudor days; indeed, for three parts in four, of Queen Elizabeth's days. Strange it is to contemplate the gentry of her reign as represented by its *élite* in the House of Commons. The honest burgesses of that House—still entitled to wages, and timid, even to servility, in the presence of the Upper House—before the throne, crouched with almost Oriental prostration. The Queen rated them as she would have done her menial servants. Every attempt at dealing with the foreign policy of the Government was harshly stifled as an intrusion into privileged mysteries; and, strangely enough, the House was repelled from such liberties,—not

* See Note, p. 327.

as beyond their jurisdiction merely, but as beyond their intellectual faculties. Barely, indeed, did the House, in its collective capacity, venture to raise its eyes beyond the latchet of the Queen's slipper, except only in the two cases of religion or of money. These were transcendant cases; for the direct service of God, or the immediate money interests of the whole nation, seemed to raise a case of duty on a level with that which they owed to the crown. But no *indirect* interest, either of the altar or the hearth, was held to constitute a privileged or even excusable case for remonstrance. Such was the abject condition of the Commons' House through the long reign of the last Tudor. The gentry were then in the process of growth; but, as yet, their strength was neither matured nor consciously made known. Now, leap over the entire reign of her successor, the first Stuart, during which things were in struggle; and pass, by a rapid transition, to the Parliaments convoked about the middle of the first Charles' reign. The effect is like that of a pantomime. From a House of Commons as homely and as humble as a *Storthing* of Norway, composed of farmers, village leaders of vestries, and illiterate attorneys, or procurators for the narrowest local interests, time and political growth have brought us to a brilliant and enlightened assembly, renewing the image of a Roman senate, and claiming a jurisdiction co-extensive with the affairs of Christendom. What was it that had worked the change? The growth of a new order. A gentry had been gradually reared. Taking advantage of the opportunities which had first arisen in the jealousy directed to the great baronial landholders by Henry VII., which had since been favoured

by the spirit of the law courts, and by the legal fictions in subversion of entails, and which had subsequently been greatly promoted by the distribution of the church lands—a new class had silently developed itself in the course of about one century; and the great political value of that revolution lay in this, that the new class was essentially a middle class, having relations downwards as well as upwards, and common interest connecting them with the order below them as well as that above them. Hitherto the only phantom of a middle class had been confined to towns; and it was a class most imperfectly adapted to the functions of a middle order, being in violent repulsion to the landed interest, and narrow in its powers. But this new order of landed gentry was diffused over the face of the country; and, for the first time, effected a real cohesion between all the forces of the state, by filling up the gulf which had divided hitherto the aristocracy from the commonalty, and the interests of real from those of moveable property.

Such was the great, though silent revolution which had been travelling forwards through the sixteenth century; and which, in the early part of the seventeenth (from 1625 to 1640), might be said to have reached its consummation. And this revolution it was which produced (as I will for ever affirm) the great civil war, properly called the *Parliamentary* war. A new and most powerful order in the land instinctively called for new powers, and for a new position amongst the ruling forces of the State. The House of Commons was then ripe for assuming that place as a legislative body, and also as a controlling body over the acts of the executive, which it

possesses at this day. But Charles and his counsellors—imperfectly aware of the great revolution effected in the equilibrium of the political forces, simply because it had been effected gradually and not violently, and reading history in a superstitious spirit—insisted upon adhering to the old usages of his predecessors, when many capital resemblances of the cases had vanished, except for the external forms. Charles was conscientious in his obstinacy, for he did no more than tread in the very footsteps of the most popular and glorious amongst his immediate predecessors, and, where all the names continued the same, it was hard to perceive that the things had essentially altered. It is also to be added—that, even if Charles had been persuaded into conceding to the House of Commons those extended powers which they claimed, this concession would not have reached the necessity of the case; for his policy was to adjourn the Parliament after the shortest possible session, so that no improved powers would have been available without a violent invasion of the royal prerogative. And, in fact, we know that this violence was one of the earliest acts of the great Parliament which met in November 1640. They were obliged to exact of the king a promise that he would not dissolve them. A twofold defect oppressed the House—defect of power, and defect of duration.

From this review of the political changes between Henry VII. and the Parliamentary war, a theory arises with respect to that great event different from any which has been adopted hitherto. Hume, and all other writers, have argued the case as though one of the two parties were necessarily in the wrong; and in the wrong upon

the whole question at issue. They say, therefore, continually, "This is unlawful;" and, "That was unconstitutional." But, in fact, neither party was in the wrong, essentially. The forms of the constitution, so far as any constitution had then been developed, were generally with the King; and as to the spirit of the constitution, a difficult point to ascertain at any time, it would be too much to expect that it should be philosophically abstracted, and valued, and applied, between two interested and impassioned disputants. But I affirm that, in fact, the constitution did not as yet exist as a whole. It existed by parts, and in tendencies then bursting into life; it was, and had been for a century back, in progress—in a progress continually accelerated; but it was not until the latter half of the seventeenth century that it was matured.

In reality, it is manifest, that, until all the parts of a machine exist, the law or principle of that machine cannot be stated. And, whilst as yet the different orders of English society were not perfectly developed, it must be impossible to talk of a constitution which expresses their mutual relations. Now, I have been insisting that the English gentry, the order which furnishes its *materiel* to the House of Commons, did not complete its development until the beginning of the seventeenth century; and that, even after this event might be viewed as accomplished, it had yet to get itself recognised for what it was in the State. The House of Commons, which was its sole organ, was a most inadequate organ,—suited to the old functions of that body which filled it, but not to the new functions of a regenerated order, which had gradually moulded itself out of the ruins projected from the explosion of two

great territorial bodies. The new creation could not incarnate itself (so to speak) in the old and imperfect organization. This seemed to be rebellion and wilful revolution; whilst, in fact, it was the mere instincts of growth. No provision had been made [how should it, unless prophetically?] for the due action of the new order, by the existing constitution; because the constitution itself was a growing thing, and waiting for its expansion; whereas, Charles viewed it as a perfect whole, long since matured. Hence arose a war; and almost, for wise men, we might say, a necessity for a war.

Out of that war arose two great results. And it is the more necessary to direct the attention to them, because a common notion has prevailed that the whole acts of the Long Parliament, and all that was gained by the Parliamentary War, were cancelled and annulled by certain illegal acts into which some part of the Parliament was afterwards betrayed, and also by the defect of some constitutional forms. This defect could not *but* exist in a struggle between the different powers in the state; and it has been too pedantically urged by Hume, and shortsightedly, for it existed on both sides. I say, then, that two great results were obtained by that war, and never again lost. The House of Commons assumed, in Charles the Second's reign, that place for which it fought: even in that reign, and under the reaction of a senseless enthusiasm for the King's person, the House assumed, and steadily maintained, that place of authority and influence which had been refused by Charles I. Nor has it ever lost the ground then won. It has continued to have regular sessions, and to be the great court for

transacting the national business,—a function which Charles I. would have sequestered almost entirely into the hands of a Privy Council, or other parts of the executive government. This is one great result: the place and functions of the Commons' House have been ascertained, and according to their own claim—and not the constitution, as a previous existence, was suffered to prescribe its place and functions to the Commons' House; but, on the contrary, the struggle of the Commons has prescribed its outline to the constitution. The other great result was, that the King's place in the constitution has been equally ascertained. Charles the First, it is well known, would not hear of a responsibility attached to the executive, no matter where it might be lodged. He peremptorily forbade his ministers to render any account of their actions, except privately to himself—least of all, to Parliament. And, of course, he did not mean by that act to acknowledge any personal responsibility. *That* he viewed as the last consummation of insolent treason. Neither must you say that this was the idea of a despot; for even the patriots of those days had very unsteady notions on the extent and true *locus* of the executive responsibility. In particular, the excellent and truly noble-minded wife of Colonel Hutchinson complains of it as a mere courtly adulation, that people said "the King could do no wrong." But her descendant and editor reproves her for this,—justly observing, that we are deeply indebted to those who first raised up that refined doctrine; which is, in fact, but another form for saying, that we cannot accept of a responsibility lodged in a quarter where delicacy and reverence might often seduce us from en-

forcing it; but that we must have a real, obvious, available responsibility, liable to no scruples in its exercises, and therefore lodged in a subject. Hence it followed also that the king cannot act by himself—that he must act by ministerial agents,—a doctrine which, by itself alone, has since that day saved the nation, at many a crisis, from civil tumults the most ruinous.

Here, then, are two great features of the British constitution which could not have pronounced themselves before the seventeenth century. A Commons' House, in adequation to a landed body (not noble, *i.e.*, not having an organ in the Upper House), could not be constitutionally defined until the landed body itself had arisen. Neither could the sanctity and inviolability of the sovereign be safely recognised, until other principles of ministerial responsibility had been established, which never would have been established unless through these struggles of the Commons. In fact, the King, in our constitution, is a great idea—and a somewhat mysterious idea; and, universally, it is true, that, where two ideas are correlates and antagonist forces, they explain themselves and define themselves at the same time; for the one is a rebound from the other.

Hence, I arrive at one object of this historical deduction,—viz., that the distinction of Whig and Tory, or any distinction which could be fitted for us of this day, in our advanced state of political refinement, could not have arisen sooner than the seventeenth century. It was in reference to the great movements which I have been tracing—movements which smouldered through the sixteenth century, but did not break into flame until the

seventeenth—that these party distinctions first arose. They refer to everything most essential in the changes and the settlements that I have been unfolding. There was a prodigious ferment in the first half of the seventeenth century; in the earlier bisection of the second half, there was a general settling or deposition from this ferment. And, as we see now, with respect to the Bonaparte system, that *things* remain, whilst *persons* have vanished; the destruction of the German Empire is ratified, the Legion of Honour still survives, whilst the fleeting agents are almost forgotten; so, of the English political settlements, we may affirm, that, generally, they are to be traced up to struggles which the generations who have benefitted by them would willingly disown. It is true, nevertheless—and in despite of all disowners and protesters—that the English Revolution of 1688–9 did little more than re-affirm, with greater precision, the principles latent in the Parliamentary war. And to those principles it is, that the distinctions of Whig and Tory have reference. Indeed, here again is a proof that the Revolution of 1688–9 was only a re-affirmation of principles previously put into action; that the terms *Whig* and *Tory* arose before that Revolution, and yet were found so sufficient that they continued to be the sole terms in use after the Revolution.

What, then, was the original application of these terms? Let us first inquire into the mere verbal meaning. You are aware that, very often indeed, denominations are not derived from essential differences, but from accidents. Thus, the *Roundheads* were so named, not from their distinguishing principles, but from the external accident

of wearing the hair cut close: that fashion distinguished them at first sight from the Cavaliers, who wore the hair long. The *Jacobins*, again, of our days, derived their name from their place of rendezvous. Now, with respect to *Whig* and *Tory*, it might be expected that two hostile names, pointing to each other, should have arisen at the same moment, and also under the same common aspect; that is, that some common idea should have been chosen, from which each name should have been struck off under an opposite relation. But the true history of the case was different: each name arose separately for itself, and possibly in a different place. The word *Tory*, had, from the first, a political application. Originally, it designated a particular class of Irish freebooters, and was probably first used in Ireland to express, in a calumnious form, that class of politicians who attributed to the king a right of levying taxes, without consent of the subject appearing by his proxy in Parliament. *Whig*, on the other hand, was doubtless first used in Scotland, and applied to the supposed sourness and ascetic temper of the religious dissenters. To *whig*, in the northern counties of England as well as in Scotland, means to turn a thing acid; thus, if you pour milk upon rum, and do it so slowly or so unskilfully as to coagulate the mixture, you are said "to *whig* it." And, by the way, I must here observe, that a derivation given by Sir Walter Scott ("Military Memoirs of the Great Civil War," p. 90, published in 1822) from the word, "*Whig*, to make haste," is mere nonsense. Nonconformists and Puritans of every class were taxed with scowling on the common social enjoyments of the world: that was expressed by

calling them the *sours*, or *Whigs*, as it were, in the cup of life. It is well known, that most of our civil rights were contended for in the seventeenth century, under the mask or under the advantage of religious claims: the Dissenters of every class were connected uniformly with the opponents of the existing Government; and by this name, expressive of a churlish unsocial temperament, it seems that they were disparaged. The Duke of Lauderdale, it is probable, transferred the word from Scotland about 1670–5. It there met with the word *Tory*, previously transferred from Ireland; and both were gradually extended and amplified into larger applications; and now, having once come into collision, began reciprocally to receive determinations from each other.

This is my account of the early history of the words, before they had been moulded, by repeated use and reverberation from each other, into direct antagonist terms. Such at length they became; and so much modified they were by long usage, that at last they settled into a direct philosophic contra-position, agreeably to their constant acceptation ever since.

This acceptation it is that I am now to explain; and I request your attention to it, as a matter curious in itself, and as one doubly curious, from the perpetual blunder which has been made in all attempts at unfolding its latent meaning and relations. Let me sharpen your attention by saying, that even Edmund Burke, subtle politician as he is, fell into the common error on this point. A word will explain the case, and rectify all its positions. If I say of two parties, that they were Trinitarians and Anti-Trinitarians, you understand at once that both could not

be right: one party must be in the wrong. But, with respect to *Whig* and *Tory*, this does not hold. There is no necessity that either should be in error. On the contrary, there is a high necessity that both should be in the right. For it is not as in a dispute between two contradictory views, where both cannot co-exist, and where either, taken singly, presents a complete and adequate theory of the subject: here the two ideas are so far from excluding each other, that both are co-essential to the entire construction of the principle. The meaning of Whig and Tory was finally settled, practically, in the long debates at the Revolution of 1688–9; and, abstracting from the use then and there made of the terms, I am entitled to say, that a Whig is he who, in the practical administration of affairs, takes charge of the popular influence, guides it, and supports it; a Tory, on the contrary, is he who takes charge of the antagonist or non-popular influence, guides it, and supports it. There are two great forces at work in the British constitution; and the constitution is sustained in its integrity by their equilibrium—just as the compound power which maintains a planet in its orbit, is made up of the centripetal force balancing the centrifugal; and as reasonable would it be to insist on the superior efficacy of the centripetal force to the centrifugal, or *vice versa*, as to ascribe any superiority to the Whig or the Tory, considered in their abstract relation to the constitution, or to charge any demerit upon either. Essentially, they represent the total sphere of the constitution, each representing one hemisphere. And, in this view, neither is wrong, nor can be wrong: both are right. And so far from being hostile to each other, each is right,

only by means of and through his antagonist: for, if the Tory were not, then the Whig would be in the wrong; and so of the Tory, in the absence of the Whig. Taken jointly, they make up the total truth. In this relation, therefore, which is the only *permanent* relation of Whig and Tory, it is evident that mere misunderstanding of the case has ever countenanced the attacks on either side; and Sir F. Burdett's declaration, that a Tory would soon be as scarce as a phœnix, is answered at once, by saying that, change the name as much as you please, both Tories and Whigs must coexist with the British constitution. Whilst *that* lasts, these parties must last,—because they are the mere abstractions, or representative names, of the two antagonist forces, balanced against each other in that political *scheme*.

Let us next say a word or two upon the *second* relation of Tories,—that relation which they have occupied, and do now occupy, to the Whigs, as a political body of partisans: not as they are concerned with the British constitution, or as representing any interest of that constitution, but as they are concerned with the conduct of public affairs; with peace, with war, with alliances, with commerce, with taxes, with public debts, with police, and the other great chapters of national economy.

To this point—the relation of Whigs and Tories, *not* to the constitution, or to any principles bearing on the constitution or arising out of it, but simply to the current business of the nation—I must exact a severe attention; for there is really no end of argument, no purpose to be answered higher than that of two brawling housewives, if the monstrous confusion is to be tolerated, of urging,

as against the creed of Whig and Tory, objections which apply only to their partisan policy, their tactics of defence or offence, and their conduct in reference to Continental wars. Many a man means, by a Tory, him who supported Mr Pitt in his anti-Gallican wars. Those wars, it *happened* that the Tories supported, and the Whigs opposed. What then? The Tories did not support them *as* Tories, nor the Whigs oppose them *as* Whigs. In neither instance did the party policy flow out of their distinguishing creeds, nor had that policy any relation to those creeds. It is of no importance, therefore, towards the valuation of Tory and Whig principles, that the wars of the Revolution should be justified, as we Tories justify them, or should be denounced, as the Whigs have always denounced them. It is no reflection upon a Tory, *as* a Tory, whether he were wrong for twenty-five years in this anti-Gallican policy—utterly and ruinously wrong—or, in the most exemplary sense, right. Wrong or right, that foreign policy leaves the question still entire and untouched, which respects the appraisement of Tory principles; for those principles were not concerned—no, not by the finest constructive casuistry, nor by the subtlest implication—in any one chapter or article of that policy. The severest Whig purist might, for anything to the contrary in his Whig creed, have coalesced, to this extent, with the Tory. That he did *not* coalesce, but placed himself in an attitude of fierce hostility, did not arise out of Whiggism—not at all—but out of his party position, in the first place; the fact that his party were out of office, and thus under the usual obligation of partisanship to say *No*, when the King's minister said

Yes;—out of this, in the first place, and, secondly, out of a weaker sensibility to the dangers of an alliance with Jacobinism, to the contagion of its passions, or to the efficacy of its example. The facts I believe to have stood thus: Mr Pitt, it is now known, upon many arguments and indications,—some derived from private testimony, but many of a public nature, and recorded in our annals, both diplomatic and parliamentary,—was pacifically disposed towards France, and upon very strong considerations, during the period from 1788 to the summer of 1792. Whatever may have been his unfriendliness to the first aspects of the Revolution and to its democratic tendencies, it is certain that this feeling would not have been allowed any practical weight in his plans, as being more than compensated, and the balance, as respected the question of war, more than restored, by his general reasons for maintaining a friendly intercourse with France. His reasons, I say, were general; but amongst them were some of a special nature, financial as well as commercial, which, at all times, perhaps, had more than their due weight in his mind. I do not admit, as a notion in any degree true, with regard to him, still less with regard to the Tories in general, that any displeasure, or reserve even, had arisen towards the French Revolution in its earlier stage, either as arguing for its cause, or as promising for its effect, a large infusion of democracy into the future government of France. I deny that this great event was frowned upon, or could have been frowned upon, by any English Tory, in so far as it taught the French nation to look for a new birth of their civil polity, and for happier days; in so far as it bade the

people, the untitled and unprivileged people, to assume their true place in the State,—the place assigned to them in ancient days, and even yet recorded in many old traditional forms (see Hotomann, Boulainvilliers, and scores beside), and in various institutions not yet antiquated in 1788. I deny that the Revolution was unpopular with the Tories, in so far as it claimed for the people a strong hand in making their own laws; and in so far as it opened the path for a purification of the executive government, with its old prescriptive abuses; for a better and more open administration of judicial justice; and, above all, for the instant abolition of the French fiscal system, with its vast train of ruinous frauds on the one hand, and of odious immunities on the other. In so far as the French Revolution did, or promised to do, any of these things, it neither was, nor to a consistent Tory could have been, other than a favoured object, and welcomed as a birth of our own example. Not for these things, any or all, were the worst among the French democrats, or the most violent explosions of democracy, objects to us of jealousy or fear. And therefore it was, that, even up to the summer of 1792, Mr Pitt continued to think of war with France as utterly impolitic,—as an event that ought to be averted, and that yet could be averted. In that summer even,—nay, I believe, even after the fatal 10th of August, when the re-gathering of old constitutional elements was finally abandoned, as it were by national proclamation,—Mr Pitt still continued to answer most gloomily and doubtfully to all warlike overtures from the Continent, and, in particular, to a private question from the Court of Versailles, Whether

it were his purpose to abandon the French monarchy, and to look on as a passive or acquiescing spectator, whilst the ruin was consummated which had already travelled so far? This question was renewed, and even more privately and earnestly, from the Queen of France, as a person more alive, by the activity of her understanding, to the perils which surrounded the throne and the royal family. Mr Pitt's answer was again vague and indecisive; and so much so, that the Queen, who had never heard of any policy not bottomed in principles of selfishness or of vain-glorious rivalship, went to her death under the firm persuasion that Pitt had sacrificed the royal cause in France to a sentiment of national jealousy; that his wishes went, perhaps, no further than the humbling of France, and (as she fully believed) to the exacting a personal vengeance from the unhappy Louis for his aid (secret before it was avowed) to the cause of American independence; but that, unhappily, he had found it impossible to arrest, at the point which would have satisfied his own narrow purpose, that frenzy which she presumed the English minister to have originally encouraged. The Queen's impression did Mr Pitt great injustice; but I mention it because it is one proof, amongst many, how strong must have been those pacific dispositions towards France, which led that acute princess to interpret them as proofs of a secret and selfish friendship to all the enemies of the Crown, and to the worst of the Jacobin incendiaries. Pitt, the original Pitt, as self-determined and formed upon his own favourite views of policy, was so far from being hostile to the French Revolution in its first movements,—nay, in any of its move-

ments, up to the judicial murder of the King,—that, in order to become hostile, as a first step towards placing himself in opposition, he was obliged to sacrifice his own early and favourite scheme of continental policy. He could no otherwise become an enemy to revolutionary France, than by abjuring his own peculiar plans. His case in relation to the French Revolution was that of all Tories. Not, therefore, I say, for what there was of hope in the French Revolution, did we Tories scowl upon that event, but for what we saw even then of ill omen in the rear; not for what it promised, but for what we feared too probably of defeated promise in the national weakness of character; for what we witnessed of blight in the very moment of birth; and for what we anticipated of treachery in the character of those who were then rising into power. Things good and things bad,—good (though oftentimes aërial) in hypothesis, bad and ruinous in the practical realization,—were too inextricably interwoven in the first stages of the French Revolution; and one reason for this mixed growth of poisonous weeds and medicinal herbs was a fact first pointed out by Burke,—that whereas with us every man is trained in some sphere or other, narrow or wide, to public business, and to the necessity of those forms which practice suggests for its own guidance and restraint; in France, the army of regular official agents in every department of the national service had completely disqualified the body of the people for public affairs, by denying them the preparatory discipline. Good and evil arose in their births, until that time came when the evil arose without the good. And the vicious interpretation of our Tory conduct is, that we

hated the blossom, because we hated the blighted fruit; that we scowled upon the early glories of the dawn, because we could not smile upon the heavens when lowering with storms and surcharged with thunder clouds. But in what did we differ from the Whigs? For what it promised, for what resemblances it offered to our own Revolution of 1688, we, no less than the Whigs, hailed the French Revolution of 1788. And how could we do otherwise? Were we not *equal* contributors to the British Revolution? Did we not *equally* participate in expelling irresponsible tyranny from the throne? Did we not *equally* co-operate to the Act of Settlement, by which the succession to the throne was for ever limited? The difference between us in 1788–1790 was simply this, that one party gave a confiding love to the promises of the new-born liberty, whilst the other gave an equal love, but coupled with a large reserve of doubt and suspicion. This was a difference which did not concern or implicate the quality of our love for what was genuine, but the mere prudential validity of our doubts in regard to what might be spurious. Time, and the succession of tumultuous years, have left the saddest of testimonies to our accuracy. But, had it been otherwise, the result would not have impeached our love for what was good in the French Revolution, but only our sagacity in deciphering the future, and the needless alarm with which we had troubled the serene prospects in reversion.

Some people who have been accustomed to regard the Tories as identified with the enemies of the French Revolution, and generally of every manifestation of popular feeling, will be apt to feel as though mystified by this

representation; and, groping about in the dark for some argument, they will say, perhaps, "But, after all, you Tories, by your very name and classification, are understood to be unfriendly to popular or democratic influences: so much is notorious; for this is the very ground of distinction between yourselves and the Whigs." Here comes in availably and triumphantly the logic of my statement under the first head. The Tories and the Whigs equally concur to the two influences,—the democratic and the antagonist influence in the English constitution. The Tories, it is true, are charged with the keeping or administration of the anti-democratic forces; the Whigs with the keeping or administration of the pure democratic forces. But this regards only the *practical* management of the service: it has no relation to the theory of the forces; since each party must have equally concurred to each several function of the constitution. As well might it be said that, because a man attends exclusively to one wheel in a system of forces, he is justified in attributing to this wheel an exclusive importance. He knows *his* wheel produces its ultimate action only through the manifold aids, and, perhaps, resistances of other forces. The Tory is able or willing to tend the anti-democratic powers of our constitution, only because he knows that another and sufficient party is charged with the exclusive management of the opposing powers. Hence I infer that, though professionally, as it were, attached to the superintendence of one set of influences, by preference to another,—and though, in times of trouble, he may have seen occasion to signalize his attachment to one set pre-eminently,—the true and

philosophic Tory cannot be supposed to wish for any preponderance to either, or to regard the one principle as being at all more indispensable than its antagonist. Either in the political system, therefore, of England, or under analogous circumstances in the system of any foreign land, a Tory must ill understand his own creed who does not wish well to the democratic influences as much as to those which are peculiarly consigned to his own guardianship. His duty, in a practical sense, is confined to the aristocratic force; as the Whigs, in the same practical sense, to the democratic force. But, in a philosophic sense, the affection of each should settle upon both; for the total constitution, *which they have both co-operated to frame*, is not democracy, is not aristocracy, but is made up of a wise temperament from each.

Mr Pitt, therefore, and the Tories, welcomed what was good or of fair promise in the French Revolution; but distrusted the men of the Revolution, and distrusted the growing necessities of their position. Mr Fox and the Whigs, not loving the good more, distrusted the men and their position less. With equal love, except where they differed as to the interpretation of the signs, the two parties had a very unequal measure of hope and confidence. Power and office happened to be lodged with those who saw reason to distrust, and thus the war arose. Upon that war, or its management, I am not going to say one word. But, having made the above explanation on the Tory way of viewing the French Revolution, I shall now go on to say that—wrong or right in its origin, well or ill conducted, successful or not successful in its termination—the war of the Revolution had no reference

whatsoever to either Whig principles or Tory principles. The war had no relation to the cause or interests of royalty. It was not a war for restoring a particular family to the throne, or for asserting the general rights of thrones. Had it been so, we should have set up the Bourbons on an eminence of wealth and splendour, and surrounded them with a court; all which we forbore to do. A *locus pœnitentiæ* was wisely provided for from the first, and a retreat left open to either belligerent according to the circumstances. For, if Mr Pitt had fettered himself by an improvident resolution that he would not treat with Napoleon Bonaparte, that was merely a personal act,—the English Government was no party to it. No object, therefore, was pursued in that war which can be connected with Tory principles. We assumed arms as men who would else have been compelled to assume them under circumstances of heavy disadvantage,—that is to say, after some allies had been weakened or destroyed, and much of the mischief accomplished which we sought to avert. Our main object was security for our own interests, and a timely repulsion from our own shores of those disorganizing principles which had already produced so much bloodshed and tyranny in France. Now, these are objects of an universal nature, having no relation whatsoever to any party, or to any set of political principles. All nations defend themselves, whether they have Tories amongst them or not. And if the Tories happened to lead in this resistance to France, that was because the Tory party was at that time in office. But a vast majority of the nation, neither Whigs nor Tories, followed and supported their leading. What was the

behaviour of the Whigs? History will call it traitorous; for the word *unpatriotic* is too feeble for the case. To have disapproved the war was open to them; but not to exult in the difficulties of their countrymen, to sympathize with the enemy, or to proclaim all resistance to him hopeless and irrational. This the Whigs did. But do I charge their conduct upon Whig principles? Far from it! To many cases which arose in that war, Whig principles had little or no application. With respect to others, as the Spanish resistance to a foreign tyrant, Whig principles were so far from being chargeable with the Whig discountenance of that struggle, that, on the contrary, those very principles furnish the very strongest reproach to the Whig policy on that occasion. Just a century before, the Tories, I am sorry to say, were playing the same traitorous part. During the last years of Queen Anne, Lords Oxford and Bolingbroke were applying themselves to the task of obliterating the brilliant services of the Whigs from 1704 to 1710. And (monstrous as such a statement may appear) there is too much reason to believe that they tolerated a treaty which else they would not have tolerated, because it was fitted to furnish a sort of presumption that the war had not been so glorious or decisive which could admit of such a termination. The treaty of Utrecht was to be used, they hoped, as an exponent of the true value attached to the services of Marlborough. In this the Tories (that is, the leaders of the Tories) acted perfidiously. In other instances during those years, we know that they were perfidious according to a legal sense, and had incurred the penalties of high treason. But *then* they acted as Jaco-

bites, and in effect renounced their Toryism; nor, in the other and more public cases, did they at all rely upon Tory principles, or make any appeal to them. They had been in desperate opposition to the Whigs, not upon any question of principles, but for power and office. Gaining both unexpectedly, they were tied by their previous opposition to a certain line of conduct; that conduct arose, not out of any principles whatever, but out of partisanship, intrigue, and accidents of position. In the same causes originated the Whig conduct with reference to the wars of the French Revolution. The case of Queen Anne in 1710 was exactly reversed from 1807 to 1815. Each party in succession had carried the frenzy of opposition to their rivals up to the very brink of public treachery; in neither case, however, with any view to their distinguishing principles, but solely on grounds of party violence, of party interest, and of mortified ambition.

Let the logic of this important distinction be no longer lost sight of; and, if we are to hear continually of "Tory misrule," &c., let it be remembered that for innumerable public measures applied to questions of taxation, of funding, of Irish administration, of war, and many others, no charge lies, or can lie against Tory principles,—as being, by their very essence, inapplicable to most questions of this nature. When the Tory party are made responsible for political acts, let it be remembered that this party, considered as a body of Parliamentary leaders, stand in two relations,—to their immediate opponents for the time, a body of rivals, who may or may not happen to be Whigs, fiercely contesting with them the enjoyment of

power and place; and, secondly, to a permanent body, the depositaries and conservators of a particular influence in the constitutional system. Acts done by some Tory minister or *clique* in the first relation, supposing them bad, are utterly impertinent as charges against a national party who stand in the second relation. The very men have vanished, or are continually vanishing, from the public scene who are concerned in the first relation; nor had they, at any time, a national existence. But the other relation is immortal, national, and coeval with the constitution.

This distinction settled, which has been the parent (whilst neglected, or not sharply pressed) of infinite misapprehensions, let us now come to a more urgent question, —a question, or rather *the* question, of this day,—the relation of Tories to the revolutionary party, the party known by the name of Radicals.

In a question of relation between any two objects, it is necessary that something should be known of both. Toryism I understand, and Whiggism I understand; but what is Radicalism? I am now going to value the pretensions of Toryism in relation to the new faith of Radical Reform. To do so with effect, I ought, first of all, to know the main articles of that faith. But *is* there such a faith? Has the new church any peculiar or novel creed? Or is it only a new mode of administering old principles, better adapted to the times, and resting, perhaps, upon new political influences. These questions ought not to have been left for my answering; or rather, for my investigation; as to an answer which would be valid for all who are interested in the case, *that* is impos-

sible. You, in Bengal, who have had Mr Buckingham amongst you, may fancy it easy enough to give the analysis of Radicalism. For the very thing which made the politics of Mr Buckingham perilous,—the very thing which excused (nothing else could have excused) the harshness and the summary despotism applied to himself and to his newspaper establishment,—was, as we all know, the too palpable existence of political evil and reformable matter in a country situated as our Indian empire is, and, under the wisest management, must be for generations to come. Reform principles were dangerous, precisely because they were but too intelligible. I do not mean to say that such principles were therefore of easy application: it did not facilitate the administration of reform, that the objects were evident which allowed of reform. In a state of society affected by so many remarkable circumstances of position, of conquest imperfectly cemented, of religion, of caste, of military tenure, of language, it may be a matter of infinite delicacy, and also of time, to apply a reform either safe or effectual, though all the world should be agreed upon the actual, and palpable, and omnipresent existence of the abuse; and therefore there is no inconsistency in my speaking of Mr Buckingham's system of agitation as perilous, whilst, at the same time, I describe it as full of practical meaning and applicability. It was so; it spoke a language but too readily interpreted by the passions, and the situation of those whom it addressed. But if you judge of reform or of agitation, as applied to English affairs, by what you saw of either in Bengal, you err grievously. The reforming principle with you stood upon

a vast and a solid basis; with us it stands upon one so narrow that it will never justify the agitation which must be kept up in order to keep itself alive; for an artificial agitation becomes necessary in exact proportion to the *non*-reality of the evils which it parades. Here I make my stand; and it would give me pleasure to hear any philosophic reformer meeting my view of the case, which may be expressed in two propositions: 1*st*, That, large as is the whole body of Reformers, it is *not* large, but shrinks into sectarian limits, *any one object of reform being given.* Given, the general necessity of reform as a universal thesis, Reformers seem to compose the mass of society. Given, any particular case of reform, the affirmative party come forward as a narrow sect. 2*ndly*, I say that, if all the known objects for which any section of Reformers has ever contended, were thrown into a common fund, and credit allowed to the Reform party collectively upon these disjointed *symbola* or separate contingents, as upon a joint-stock property,—even thus, there will not be realized a sufficient interest to justify, or so much as to explain, the impassioned vehemence of the Reformers. What would I infer from *that?* I would infer that the real objects which govern the leaders of the *movement*, are not those which they avow, but such as for the present they find it prudent to dissemble. Let me speak to each point separately.

First, with respect to the schisms amongst the Reformers, I affirm peremptorily, that the term *Radical* is used with as large a license, and as little care for precision, or for any one practical use of language, as the term "*middle class*," which, in the fraudulent acceptation of modern

incendiaries, confounds all the unnumbered gradations of English society which lie between the very highest and the very lowest. The common term *Radical* would entitle us to presume some unity of purpose. Will the present Reformers arrogate such a unity to their party, and tell us in what capital object it is seated? For my part, I know of only one point in which they all agree, and that is negative,—they all dissent, or believe that they dissent, from the Tories. But that tells us, at the most, what it is which they do *not* profess. Yet not even that; for the *Tory* supposed in their opposition, is a Tory of their own fiction. As to the *positive* articles in their creed, the following statement exhibits the case according to my view; and I do not think that any temperate Reformers will call it in question: Suppose the alphabet to represent the total number of subdivisions already existing amongst the Reformers. A is a patron of some one proposed change in our institutions,—of this one and of none beside; B is a patron of this and of one other; C of this and two others; and so on, until we come to the formidable Z, who patronises two round dozens of such changes; all of which changes, so long as they are yet untried, enjoy, by anticipation, the flattering name of *reforms*. And hence, by a parity of right, the whole twenty-four orders of these Reformers are all equally relied on, in argument, for drawing together as in a common cause. But try it in action, propose the practical test of some special object, and the nominal union of the Reformers instantly breaks up into schisms and internal feuds; some professing even downright hostility to the object in question, and the major part indifference.

Z, for example,—the zealot Z, who declares himself beforehand for everything wearing the aspect of change,—Z counts backwards as far as A for a cheerful support on some single question. Upon a second question equally dear to himself, he is aware that he can count back only to B; upon a third, only to C; and so on. The sections represented by A, by B, by C, &c., will forsake him in succession; until at length he will be reduced to the feeble support of X, Y, Z; and, finally, for his twenty-fourth object, in *his* eyes, perhaps, ranking not at all below any of the others, he will have to depend upon himself alone,—to speak, by a scholastic abstraction, upon his own *Zedeity*. For what purpose, you will ask, do I insist upon this artifice, which may seem a common party stratagem? I do so, because it is used not only to throw dust in the eyes of us, their opponents, but because it dupes themselves. Here and there a question is found which does really engage the active affections of so large a majority among us,—suppose the question of the Reform Bill,—that, without much violence to the truth, it may be called a *national* object. Hereupon the Reformers, who, as to this one question, count back from omnivorous Z to fastidious A, assume the title of the national party,—or, perhaps, *tout court*, of "the nation;" and with some show of reason, as regards this one great popular question. It is true that we Tories have still the old right of appeal from the nation ill-informed to the nation well-informed, and from the nation guessing at results to the nation dealing with absolute experience; but still, for the mere matter of fact, the Reformers were in that instance a national party. Once having established that title, these same Reformers

are determined to plead it beneficially upon all other questions whatsoever,—and very often it makes the strongest nerve of their argument,—as though the title of national, which inhered in the particular *question*, inhered in the *persons* of the Reformers, and could henceforwards be urged indefinitely on behalf of any object patronised by the same party. On the memorable question of the Reform Bill, the Reformers were certainly identified for the time, and for that particular service, with a very large majority of the British people. They proved their identification by practical tests; they arrayed "Unions," technically so called, upon a scale of immensity that resounded throughout Europe, and must have appalled even you in Bengal. Those Unions counted themselves by tens of thousands; one in the centre of England mustered above a hundred thousand; and their relations to the existing government were far more those of jealousy and mutual suspicion, as between a body overawing and overawed, than of confidence and reciprocal gratitude. The terror of these Unions, I can assure you, sat more heavily upon the hearts of their nominal friends, Lord Grey's administration, than upon any of us, their formal antagonists. Now, these terrific federations were evoked by the Reformers. The same Reformers evoked through every city of this great empire vast triumphal arrays of the population, in celebration of their victory. Whether for achieving the victory, or for commemorating it, they were able to put forth a power greater than that of kings the most despotic. And, thus far, they were entitled to style themselves "*national*," or even, in a popular sense, "*the nation*." But their power ceased with that question.

Nay, for that very question, they would not again be able to receive the same support. It is a fact that the people have been deeply disappointed in the vague expectations which too generally they built upon the Reform Bill. For, what has it accomplished? The main change, as respects the electors, is, that what was once valued as a distinction has ceased to be such. To have an eight-thousandth or a ten-thousandth share, in the manufacturing one or two legislators, is too trivial an honour to be valued; and, in reality, is so little valued that, except where angry passions have been roused, there is a general torpor in qualifying for the exercise of this franchise. *Registration*, the test of political zeal, languishes. But, after all, the value of the Reform Bill must lie in the result. Not how, or by what sort of means the end is attained, but what *is* the end attained,—there lies the question. Not the changes in the electors, but in the quality of the elected,—*that* is the point for us. Now, what sort of a House of Commons have we had since the great Reform? Of course, I say nothing of the House now sitting,—*that* is notoriously a heaven-descended senate, perfect and immaculate. But, limiting my remarks to the previous Houses under the Reform Bill, the changes perceptible to the public eye have been chiefly two: First, The absolute disqualification of the House for carrying on the King's government; without any one advantage as yet gained to the public service, such is now the restiveness and the self-contradictiveness, the pertinacity in one direction, and yet the unsteadiness in another, of the Commons' House, that the indispensable machinery of an executive administration will not work

smoothly for any continuance, no matter who is minister. The French Government is annually advancing upon the same path of perplexity. The public business in each country is destined apparently to endless stagnations for the future,—endless ruptures of administrations, and endless dissolutions of Parliament. And the final tendencies of these changes are such that I will not lower their importance by treating them incidentally. The other change, and it is a change already perceptible to the public eye, lies in the altered tone of manners prevalent through the whole course of debate for the last two years. Formerly, the House of Commons was a school of gentlemanly manners,—the most dignified in the annals of man; more so than that "assembly of kings," the Roman senate, in this important feature, that personalities,—not only oblique personalities and such as were said *of* a member, but direct apostrophes *to* a member,—were tolerated by the Roman manners, and treated as mere figures of rhetoric; whereas, by the English Parliament, they were checked and stifled in the birth. Since the Reform Bill, partly from the effects of that Bill and the invitation which it holds out to the spirit of popular license, and partly, it may be, from the uncontrolled temper of particular members,—a mixed tone has prevailed, of puerile levity, of histrionic buffoonery, and of street ruffianism. This latter feature has been sometimes explained out of the Irish infusion into our national councils, which, since the Emancipation Bill, has been, for two reasons, of a more democratic quality: First, Because the Irish representation having been more Popish, has really settled into lower grades of rank and property; and, secondly, Be-

cause the Irish representation has fallen too generally under one insolent domination, which adopts the policy of personal abuse as one of the weapons most effective in party warfare. But no matter how explained,—for the reasons alleged, or for whatever reasons,—Parliament, in its general temper and tone of manners, has been in some degree ruffianised; and what remains of good breeding, or decorum, or gentlemanly restraint, may be set down to the account of those regulations inherited from an unreformed House, which a reformed one will perhaps be ashamed to abrogate, but which it never would have spontaneously enacted. It will be odd, indeed, as a spectacle, yet apparently it is one not very improbable, if our senate should invert the natural relations to the nation which it represents, and should gradually ripen amongst us a model of Kentucky violence; whilst the people, in its lowest classes, have been, for many years back, outgrowing their insular roughness. Yet such things have been. The Athenian people, at that same era when they had attained their utmost expansion in general civility and in the arts of refinement, and reputed themselves not so much the patrons as the sole depositaries of παρρησια, or the right of free speaking, yet carried their illiberal hostilities to such excess in their debating assemblies, that, amongst all the political harangues still surviving, and those delivered by the boldest of their orators, not one but teems with earnest passages deprecating interruption or personal violence, so often as the conscientious speaker approached a topic which he knew to be unpopular. Whether we are tending to a state of Athenian license and scurrility, I will not presume to say.

But, if some further changes were made in the same direction,—were a five-pound qualification substituted for the present,—I cannot doubt that we should reach that consummation *per saltum*. Meantime, the whole upshot of the Bill, according to its working hitherto, has been what I say: no valuable change as respects the electoral body; as respects the body elected, a change of temper and manners altogether for the worse; and, in the same body, as a machinery for co-operating with the executive, precisely that change and no more, which, whilst hanging a drag on the smoothness and velocity of its motion, has done nothing to improve its purity. The movement and play of public business is *sufflaminated*, and not in a way which looks like accident; and all this with no tittle of countervailing benefit to any one national interest.

Now, if these are the weightiest results from the Reform of Parliament, it is with some reason that the people are disappointed. With reason, or without reason, it is certain that they *are* so. And vainly indeed would the Reformers appeal again to those tremendous agencies, now sleeping, which once they invoked with so much effect. The poor mechanics and day-labourers who walked in those triumphs, and sacrificed their daily bread to one day's joyous parade, did so because they looked for some golden age which was thence to date its bright unfolding of happier years. What a mockery, how hollow a pageantry of political juggling, would they have held it, could they have believed that all this drama was to terminate in securing office and retiring salaries to some score and a half of Whig lords and gentlemen! As yet, the people have seen no other result from this all-cele-

brated Reform; nor is it likely they will. And the issue as respects them—*i. e.*, the people of the lower orders—is, that henceforth they will err by defect rather than by excess, in estimating the value of any promises connected with changes in the constitution of Parliament.

Yet, because it is undeniable that, three years ago, in behalf of a scheme yet untried, the Reformers *did* possess power in a terrific extent, they have ever since continued to assume that, in opposing *them*, we oppose the nation. That is their main reliance. As a party opposed to a party, they would lie under the common presumptions of error; but, as the nation opposed to a party, they have a dispensation from argument, and an immunity from error. If they can prevail by logic, it is well; but if not, *that* also is well; for a nation is entitled to be made happy on its own terms, even if those terms should happen to involve a multitude of errors. It is the case, in *their* representation, of a party interested, and absolute master in the last resort, arguing against a mere speculative dialectician, who has no stake in the question litigated. Such is the use which they make of a single victory on a single chapter of their creed. But I, in answer to these pretensions, maintain that, from a single coincidence with the people, they unwarrantably infer a general identification with the popular wishes or interest. I affirm that, on many points, the Reformers are not only a party, a section,—but also a very narrow party, a very slender section; and that this is hidden from their own as it is from general observation, by the accident that the same men who compose this narrow party, this slender section, are those who once were conspicuous in leading

a really national movement, and leading it by pretty nearly the same organs of the press as they now employ. So much in explanation of my first proposition,—that the Reformers, if large as a collective body, are *not* large when thrown into those subdivisions which would arise instantly upon putting to the vote any one separately of those several objects which they patronise.

But I rest more upon the second proposition, that if all these several objects, each resting on the support of an insulated section amongst the Reformers, were, by a monstrous concession, assumed to be common objects, objects pursued with the common forces of the whole party, even thus there would not result a cumulative interest sufficient to sustain a national movement, or even a national sympathy. The Reformers, if they are not national, are nothing. As a party, we Tories, we Whigs, are older than they: we have the rights of primogeniture; and, moreover, we grew out of the constitution itself, whereas they have grown out of the wantonness of peace, and the defect of excitement succeeding to a season of adventurous war, and out of the political agitation which attempted to supply that defect. Besides that, we Tories and we Whigs,—though, doubtless, one of us *was* a rascally party as respects the mere conduct of affairs since the French Revolution,—yet, as respects the constitution, as respects political principles, we cannot *but* be right, since we exhaust the whole possibilities of political principle. The ground, the whole *arena*, is pre-occupied; there is no standing-room for a new party, under any conceivable description or designation, except upon the allegation that we—the Tories and Whigs—have ne-

glected our constitutional functions; that, being speculatively right, we have, in practice, suffered our own principles to lie dormant. The Reformers, therefore, are bound, in strict logic, to follow the precedent of Edmund Burke, in relation to the Whigs. He had professed himself a Whig in all parts of his life. But, suddenly, the Whigs, or some of them, announced such opinions with regard to the French Jacobinism as were shocking to his views of the English constitution. In this dilemma, how did he proceed? Did he abjure Whiggism? Did he set up a new party, a new creed, a new doctrine of Radical Burkeism? By no means. He contended that Whiggism, as interpreted by Mr Fox and the Duke of Norfolk, was not the Whiggism of their common constitutional ancestors,—not the Whiggism which they had inherited from 1688–9. And upon that logic, he composed his famous appeal from the new (or spurious) to the old (or genuine) Whigs; and many persons of great intellectual power and experience—such as Mr Wyndham, the Duke of Portland, &c.—saw reason to accompany his secession in that instance. Why the Reformers should not have followed this example, I can only explain by supposing that the accidental part supported by Whigs and Tories in relation to office and current affairs, all transitory and fugitive aspects of Toryism or Whiggism, had blinded them to the permanent and fixed relations which the two parties occupy in regard to the constitution; which relations, if any new men usurp, they, in effect, become Whigs and Tories under a mere change of name. Either the Reformers have committed the error here indicated, or else they mean to say this: "We

assume no permanent functions of control in regard to the constitution,—ours is an occasional office: we see or fancy certain great abuses,—we confederate for the purpose of abating them,—and, whenever that service shall be accomplished, our confederation is, *ipso facto*, dissolved; we are an occasional *Fehm-Gericht*,—an occasional array against an occasional mass of evil." This way of representing their position as a party, and this way only, clears them of the impertinence (to use the word in its proper Latin sense) which belongs to all intrusions upon other men's provinces. They have interfered only for a specific service,—for the abatement of abuses to which, it seems, the Whigs and Tories were pretty equally blind. Let us now, therefore, inquire closely what *are* the abuses which the Reformers have denounced; what *are* the reforms which they propose to introduce? By *that* we shall learn how far the Reformers stand, as a party, upon any sufficient basis, and shall have an answer to the question I have raised: Whether the whole amount of objects for which they contend (that is, *openly* contend), can be held sufficient—even treated as a common fund, and not as a series of separate interests belonging to separate sections of the reforming body—to warrant the name of a national interest, or to warrant the wish, as well as the expectation, of promoting them by a national movement.

Now, then, counting over the different objects for which, at any time, the Reformers have openly contended, we shall be astonished to find them so few. 1. *Household Suffrage*, —or the substitution of a five pound for a ten pound qualification, or, generally, any means whatever for en-

larging the electoral basis,—some Reformers treat as a *sine quâ non;* but others speak of it with doubt, or with indifference, or with positive disapprobation. 2. A measure which at present wins more general favour is, the *Disfranchisement of the Spiritual Peers* in the Upper House. 3. *The Ballot*, a favourite scheme amongst very earnest and energetic Reformers, is still discountenanced by numbers of those who, at one time or other, have been looked up to as leaders of the movement,—by Lord Brougham in particular, and, so recently as the 19th of May 1835, by Lord John Russell, even while yet smarting from the uncicatrized mortification of his Devonshire campaign, and openly ascribing his defeat to intimidation. Now, where a personal interest so keen as this will not overrule a man's objections, the case, as in relation to him, may be thought hopeless; and yet I question myself whether some, who have hitherto opposed the ballot, are not covertly preparing a case of alleged extremity to justify its adoption, which case would, of course, derive the strength of a rebound from the fact and the notoriety of their previous opposition. The talk is more and more of "intimidation;" every species and variety of influence, however laudable and salutary, by which the upper ranks are connected with the lower, being denounced under that name. Rejected candidates have a natural license for complaining: we all construe *their* complaints indulgently. But another class, the class of timid voters, have reasons still more urgent for pleading intimidation, where nothing of the kind exists. Shopkeepers of a petty order, who cannot afford to make enemies either amongst Reformers or anti-Reformers, especially where their natural

temper concurs with their position in producing a timid love of quietness,—men hating strife, constitutionally, perhaps, as much as they fear it in policy, and very often having no decided views on the party questions at issue,—are apt enough to plead a vague necessity of complying with some overruling influence in some imaginary background, where no such influence has been, in fact, put forward or insinuated, and where the alleged necessity of their situation has existed only in pretence, or, at most, in suspicion. These cases of merely presumptive intimidation will multiply exceedingly, as the cases multiply of electioneering contests. Intimidation, and obscure insinuations of intimidation, will be offered as the best general way of shaping an evasion from the persecutions of canvassers, until it will be said that a case of necessity has arisen for the Ballot. That measure will therefore triumph; but at present, the Reformers are greatly divided upon its merits.

These three measures—one for enlarging the constituency; one for giving effect to that enlarged constituency, by liberating them from alien influence; and a third for altering the present constitution of the Upper House—are so evidently parts of the same system, all having the same obvious purpose to throw a vast infusion of democracy into the legislative forces of the land, that he who objects to any one of them, stands declared, in that act, an enemy, or, at the least, a hollow friend of the reform principle. Sir William Molesworth, during the late struggle in South Devon, talked with zealotry for the Ballot: why?—because he is a sincere Reformer, and knows that the whole purposes of his party can be ob-

tained but slowly and imperfectly without the Ballot. Lord John Russell opposes the Ballot: why? because he, by interest and by connexions, is, and must be, an aristocrat; and if he avails himself of aid from the reform party, it is because the path of the Reformers coincides, for a certain part of the way (or may, by skilful management, be made to coincide), with the path of his own political *clique*. But though he has gone into this dangerous alliance for momentary considerations of benefit to his party [in reality, it is evident that Lord John's private party must have gone to wreck in 1830 but for this alliance, and equally evident that, on many subsequent occasions, that party has been violently held above water by this artificial connection], yet it is impossible to suppose that any relations merely personal can absorb those permanent relations to the aristocratic interest in which he is placed by his rank, his numerous and illustrious connections, and the vast possessions of his family. It happens, also, that Lord John, before he came into a situation that required him to practise any arts of dissimulation, had written for many years as a regular author,—had written very respectably, and upon themes connected with political and constitutional questions: by a rare misfortune for himself, he, more than any other of his party, was *committed* in the diplomatic sense; and thus it happens that we have a key to his native opinions, and can appreciate the basis of his views, before they had received any disturbing impulse from the difficult circumstances of his position. Lord John, therefore, in common with other aristocratic Reformers, keeps his eye for ever fixed upon that parting point at which *his* road is to

diverge from that of the Reformers. He has a quarrel in reversion whenever it shall seem that the hour has struck for this parting; and not impossibly this very question of *Ballot* is destined to furnish the matter of quarrel. Far am I from supposing it at all shocking to our historical experience, that Lord John Russell, like the too famous father to the reigning King of the French, might go on to the very catastrophe of the great drama, with the avowed enemies and destined destroyers of his order. The case is common enough. But, in this instance, drawing my auguries from the known respectability of the man, I believe that Lord John will effectually co-operate with those who meditate ruin to the aristocracy of England,—and too probably will accomplish it,—not by going along with them to the end, and glorying in his own shame,—I believe him too good a man, and too discerning a man, for *that*,—but by lending them a hesitating sanction, and, with many misgivings, yielding to their demands an unsteady assistance, until, at last, growing alarmed, and halting with an air of defiance, he finds out that his sanction and his assistance are become alike indifferent to the Reformers. He will first see cause to resist, when all the powers have been surrendered by which resistance can be made effectual.

NOTE TO THE PAPER

ON THE

POLITICAL PARTIES OF MODERN ENGLAND.

THE following paper, PUBLISHED NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME, was written by Mr De Quincey, partly as a continuation of the preceding article, and partly in order to meet the protests and dissentient comments made by the editor of "Tait's Edinburgh Magazine," wherever the editor considered his contributor mistaken in matters of historical fact, or drawing unfair conclusions. The censor referred to, therefore, is the editor of "Tait's Magazine," who, it is fair to add, though diametrically opposed to Mr De Quincey in political tenets, made his strictures in the most friendly spirit.

Mr De Quincey, it is said, pled hard for the admission of this last paper into the Magazine: but the editor did not choose to continue the controversy, or to give his opponent the last word. The paper was, therefore, with-

held, and now comes forth like a voice from the Opium-eater's tomb.

It has been thought unnecessary to print here the comments made by the editor of "Tait's Magazine," as they are sufficiently quoted by Mr De Quincey to be intelligible. Any one desirous, however, of referring to these comments, will find them in "Tait's Edinburgh Magazine" for December 1835 and January 1836.

ON THE POLITICAL PARTIES

OF

MODERN ENGLAND.

[WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1837.]

AFTER an interval of a year and something more, I resume my letter on the political parties of modern England. An interruption of that duration was likely to have acted disadvantageously on the interest. For upon what was that interest founded? It was an interest founded upon the danger which threatened an ancient state in the very heart of her civil polity; upon the grandeur of that state, and upon the imminence of that danger. Now, in the course of this interval, such has been the quality of our experience, that no one of the dangers apprehended at its commencement has taken a less louring aspect, and new ones have arisen. In fact, great advances have been made by the Radical party: not, indeed, in things won and accomplished, but in the pretensions put forward; in the haughtiness and gross plainness of their language, no less than in the audacious character of extremity which marks their tendency. At present it may be truly said, that with the wind setting strong upon a most perilous

shore, we ride at single anchor; that anchor is the House of Lords; and if that gives way, all is lost. Thenceforwards, for people like you or me, England will be no habitable land.

There cannot, in fact, be a better illustration of the treasonable audacity which has begun to characterise the schemes and the language of the Radicals, than this very assault, according to its variety of plans, upon the House of Lords. Were things called by their right names, it is as much and as decidedly treason, by all its bearings and instant tendencies, as any direct act against the king's crown, and in its consequences a thousand times worse than to have compassed the death of any the best prince that ever lived. So little does any reverence dwell in Radical minds for the existing restraints of law and the constitution, that in most of the schemes which have come under my notice, not one word is said on that point which is the most perplexing of all,—viz., by what power known to the laws of this land any revolution in the Upper House is to be undertaken. Perfectly overlooking the fact that this legislative body owes no obedience to any other power in the state, but is on a footing of absolute equality with all, and as much entitled to abolish or to remodel the Lower House as that House to attempt either one or the other process upon the Upper,—the Radicals confine their whole discussions to the particular mode and the extent of change which will meet their ulterior purposes. Not who and by what arms is to be the reformer, but how large and destructive is to be the reformation,—*that* is the Radical point of mooting. Here, however, at least, Radicalism will find itself at fault. *The House of*

Lords will not be reformed on this side of a civil war,—which war, on the part of the reforming faction, will be a rebellion, and liable to the pains of a rebellion. The nation, in its better and more powerful sections, is well aware of these two capital facts: 1*st*, That even if the Lords' House were not (as it is) the sole bulwark of our liberties, yet that to tamper with its present constitution, as known to the laws and usages of the land, would not merely *infer* a revolution as its immediate consequence, but would in itself, formally as well as virtually, *be* a revolution, and as complete a one as ever was effected in modern days; 2*dly*, That were this otherwise, and supposing that, without any gross violation of the constitution, some remodelling of the House might be devised—supposing, even, that good results might be anticipated from such a measure (always, however, allowing for the uncertainty of political anticipations)—supposing, in short, all the circumstances exactly what they are *not*,—even in that case the change could not be encouraged, no, nor so much as entertained for one moment's speculation, by any good patriot, because there are no known forces, reconcilable with elementary law, which are competent to the task of working the least change in a body which is itself a fountain of all lawful change. There are no known functions of any public body or corporation recognised by the law of England which point to any such task, or are applicable to such a task, as that of reforming either House of Parliament. And changes, even good and salutary in themselves, which cannot be accomplished without a preliminary breach of law or contempt of sacred rights, are not the changes which the

people of Great Britain are accustomed to countenance. Therefore, I undertake to predict, for the private rumination of Radicalism, that no such reform of the Lords' House, as has been so freely denounced since the Parliamentary session of 1836, will or can be undertaken; and *that*, not only because the nation would be roused to a sense of the impending ruin, and to a sense of the real principles at work, by a revolutionary proposal so definite in its character, but also because no public body durst so far overstep its powers, or commit so palpable an absurdity, as to take the first step towards any such object. Let any man figure to himself the outrage upon common sense which would be involved in a member of the Commons' House seriously making a motion and a speech, and the House itself dividing upon a question of changes to be wrought in the tenure of power, or in the administration of power belonging to a body, or in the very composition of a body, which stands on the most perfect equality of title and legislative authority with the pretended house of reformers, over and above the advantage of being the highest court of jurisprudence in the kingdom, and the court of final appeal, whilst the other House is no court at all. The House of Commons has no more power to take one step towards such a pretended reformation, than it has to debate upon the partition of Persia; and arrogant as that House has sometimes shown itself (and needlessly arrogant, as in the arrest of Sir F. Burdett—amenable to the common course of law—by the Speaker's warrant), I am well persuaded that it will never seriously lend itself to a malice so entirely impotent. For into what shape could the House throw the expression of its

will? A law, or anything resembling a law, it could not pass in the supposed case of hostility to the other House. A *resolution* then, at the uttermost, would be the highest shape in which they could give expression to their revolutionary frenzy. To this *brutum fulmen* the Lords would not need to pay any the least attention; nor is there, indeed, any known channel, or any rational form of business, by which either House could communicate with the other on such a subject. However, as new cases introduce new forms and new resources, suppose Mr Roebuck to march up to the bar of the Lords, armed with a message conveying the fact of such a motion and resolution, and declaratory of a wish on the part of certain Commons that their Lordships would forthwith surrender their power and privileges to a reform committee of the Lower House. What follows? First, a committal to Newgate of the individual messenger, and a message to the Commons notifying that fact. And the winding up of the affair would be the bringing of the offender to the bar a little before the session closed, a reprimand severely expressed from the Chancellor, and finally, his liberation upon payment of his fees. Or, imagine the House of Commons sufficiently extravagant to pursue the matter, with what colour of right could they support their absurd message? They would find it impossible to deny the fact of their own original aggression; with whatever intention, they must concede that they had been in error as regarded known and settled rights; useful or not useful, they must concede that they had entertained a question, a debate, and a vote, upon the rights of others equally sacred with any of their own. And the charge against the House of

Lords would then reduce itself to this, that they had "disobeyed a resolution of a House of Commons,"—a new species of crime, and as much known to our jurisprudence as it would be to charge a bishop, dean, and chapter, with disobeying the orders of the Admiralty. The House of Lords laughs at schemes for reforming it,—unless, indeed, such as arise within its own body. It is doubtful whether the Lords themselves possess any considerable powers in that direction; most certainly they have none which go to the extent of a complete alteration in the composition of their body, or in the title (viz., hereditary succession and immediate summons of the Crown) by which they hold their seats. These titles to their legislative office it is as little in the power of the Lords to alter as in that of the Commons. For any alteration here, as it affects the Lords immediately, finally affects the Crown and the rights of the Crown. Banish the peers by inheritance, and the aristocracy is destroyed (politically speaking); banish the new peers summoned by the Crown, and the king is destroyed *pro tanto;* banish the spiritual peers, and the church is destroyed; make the House elective, and the whole government and polity of these kingdoms are destroyed, and will be instantly converted into a new thing, an anomalous monster, having no relation to the ancient constitution, and (upon many considerations peculiar to this country and to the arrangement of its property) so utterly unlike any known precedent, that it must leave the deepest anxiety and uncertainty for the practical working of such a system, and no one certainty but this—that not a relic would survive of the old British constitution.

Now, resuming the business of my letter, I have first to complain of some oversights committed by my censor. The first is an unwise one: unwise, for it is not wholly without choice, a choice influenced by his daily reading. The very ablest men (and my censor I have reason to think one who is certainly of that number) are and must be emasculated by the constant quality of what they read, whenever that reading lies amongst the unpremeditated polemics of daily newspapers. Newspapers, it is true, have their points of preëminence; and it is even an advantage—nay, a very great one—for the eloquent expression of what a man feels, that he should be driven to express himself rapidly. There is the same advantage as in conversation. And what is that? Simply this: that when thoughts chase each other as rapidly as words can overtake them, each several thought comes to modify that which succeeds so intensely as to carry amongst the whole series a far more burning logic, a perfect life of cohesion, which is liable to be lost or frozen in the slow progress of careful composition. The case approaches that of personal passion, whether of rage, grief, or revenge. When was it ever found that a man in passionate anger did or could wander from his theme? Incoherence there might be *apparently* in his words, or his transitions might be too rapid to be intelligible to an unsympathising hearer; but the essential thoughts could not be otherwise than closely knit together. Rapid and extempore composition, therefore, has its own special advantages; but they are advantages which appeal to the sensibilities. But to balance this potent advantage as regards the instant sensibilities, there are evils more than compensatory as regards the

understanding. There can in such rapidity be no looking back, so as to adjust the latter sweep of the curve to the former; there can be no looking forward, so as to lay a slow foundation for remote superstructures. There can be no painful evolution of principles; there can be no elaborate analysis; there can be no subtle pursuit of distinction. Passion, indeed (and I have been saying so), has a logic of its own; and a logic as intense as a process of crystallization: but it is a crystallization among the separate parts, *ab intra:* for between the parts *ab extra* the transitions are naturally more than lyrically abrupt.

In politics, of necessity, persons mix with things: cases of the moment mix with principles. And the temptations of personality, concurring with the unavoidable application to the topic of the hour, all combine to force a man into capricious and desultory transitions, however intensely fused may be each separate fragment of his disquisitions. Hence for all readers, or at least for all students of the daily press, there arises a sad necessity of weaning their minds from the severities of logic. And a man who descends from long habits of philosophic speculation to a casual intercourse with fugitive and personal politics, finds even in the very ablest minds [an infirmity of step which retards his pace, ... at first surprises him].*

Precisely from this habituation to the hasty thinking of the daily press, and not otherwise, can I explain the first oversight of my censor, which must have grown out of hurry and inattention. I will point out this error by

* The words in brackets are erased in the MS., where the sentence is incomplete.

referring to a letter from another person, practised in politics, which errs in the very same way :—After taxing my paper with other faults, the writer goes on to say— "You have neglected to pursue the history of the Whigs and Tories; you have given us no running commentary on their conduct at different eras; you have not illustrated their principles as applied to the main critical cases which have arisen since the Revolution of 1688–9." Now, on my part, in answer to this objection, I demand to know, What concern have I with the "*conduct*" of the Whigs and Tories? My object from the first was, not to give a history of our political parties, but an account of their principles, of their creed, of their doctrinal code. And this, I contend, with my purposes, was the only useful way of treating the subject. I will explain. The capital object of my paper was to facilitate a valuation of the Whig and Tory principles, as contrasted with the Radical, and therefore to bring them into a close comparison. Now, principles and creeds may be compared; but as to the course of action pursued by the old constitutional parties, as compared with the modern reforming parties, there are as yet no materials: the muse of History, as regards the Radicals, sits yet in silence "waiting for a theme." The Radicals have not yet come forward on the stage as actors. For a few years they have prompted and suggested to the Whigs; but no Radical administration has yet existed: and until then there is no field of comparison. Secondly, as respects the Whigs and Tories, not one in five hundred cases of political experience have had any relation to Whig or Tory principles, which fact shows the uselessness of pursuing

their conduct through the details of our history: the two parties have acted as any other confederations of men in ancient history, or in modern continental history; that is, they have opposed each other as *Ins* and *Outs*, as men having power against men in quest of power,—parties which would have existed no less had Whig and Tory never been heard of. This or that war, for instance, bearing no possible relation to Whiggism or Toryism, has been supported on the one side as useful to some interest of commerce, or of a supposed balance amongst the states of Christendom; it has been opposed on the other side as too rashly undertaken, as too carelessly planned, or as too feebly conducted: all of which arguments furnished colorable views of policy, true or not true for that occasion, but in any case perfectly remote from considerations of Whig or Tory doctrine. Such a tax, again, was bad on general grounds of economy, or it violated some pledge which had been given, or it was ill graduated, or it was collected at a disproportionate expense. But still, right or wrong, these grounds of opposition involve no appeal to the characteristic principles of Whig and Tory. Even the Regency question—one of those most entitled to be held a constitutional question of all which occurred throughout the last century—was debated on arguments aloof from Whiggism or Toryism. And Mr Fox was influenced to the course he took, of maintaining a right in the heir-apparent, upon any incompetence in the sovereign, to assume the regency as a trust which had devolved to him by legal succession, not assuredly by any reliance on Whig principles (on the contrary, Mr Pitt's doctrine that any regency, and the personal shares in any regency,

must be a mere creation of Parliament, wore a much more popular air, and so far would have had the better right to be called the Whig doctrine); not, therefore, on Whig principles was Mr Fox moved to take this unpopular course, but entirely upon personal motives of friendship for the Prince of Wales. The American war is another of the rare cases for which Whig and Tory principles have been thought available; but upon no reasons which argue any clear acquaintance with Whig and Tory distinctions. The case of colonies had not been specially reserved at the great era of settling our constitution, and was therefore not specially provided for. And as to the general case of taxation imposed upon bodies not directly represented,—*that* was surely virtually discountenanced as much by the Tories as by the Whigs,—the settlement of the Revolution having been the joint work of both. Hence I argue, that to have pursued the Whigs and Tories through a course of historical cases, which rarely belonged to their creed *as* Whig or Tory, but almost universally to their position as ministerial or anti-ministerial, could have answered no useful purpose. Finally, over and above the two arguments already stated against the reasonableness of such an historical deduction (the first against its possibility, the second against its use and relevance), I contend that, even were it possible, and were it relevant, still the public interest and the particular question I had undertaken, of appraising the three chief denominations of party amongst us, must be far more deeply affected by an account of their separate principles than of their separate conduct. "*We*," says my censor, "*care comparatively nothing for your dormant creed.*" A

more unwise saying it would be difficult to devise. Creeds are eternal: if dormant, they may be recalled to life: if betrayed, they are open to revindication. Men are transient—as transient as their passions; past conduct is no pledge for future conduct, even in the same men coming into new positions and contradictory interests; but in a profession of faith you have at least an appeal to the conscience of the individual, and you have the authority which belongs to the standards of ancient wisdom, owned for such through many generations. If at this present moment it were desirable for any purpose to bring under the eyes of a Spaniard (standing, suppose, in the circumstances of doubt and inquiry which Mr Blanco White has described as belonging to his own case) a comparison of the Church of England with that of Papal Rome, in which direction would you turn your appeal?—to *the pretensions* and character of the English clergy, or to the Thirty-nine Articles as interpreted and explained by the learning of three centuries? To the variable *fact* of the clerical conduct at different eras, and to an estimate of their social value and consideration at these eras; or to the eternal monuments of the creed professed by the Church of England, and the secondary but still important settlements of her discipline and ecclesiastical government? Most assuredly to these last. For the Spaniard would himself say, "I am occupied with an interest transcending personal regards; towards an attempt to estimate the truth and value of the English Confession. Possibly if all other means of judging were denied me, some very imperfect aid might be drawn from the prevailing character (or reputed character) of the English priesthood: conjec-

turally, the Church might be measured by her ministerial agents; but surely this indirect appraisement would be preposterous for one who enjoys the most absolute access to all the *direct* means of making up his judgment in the Anglican Church, and can apply his mind to the very words and professions of the Anglican Church, by way of ascertaining for himself what is her title to be held a depositary of divine truth. Besides, any well-informed Englishman would in such a case be disposed to tell the Spaniard that a judgment of the Anglican Church, built upon the very fairest appreciation of her clergy, must be conflicting or contradictory in its final result: the clergy have varied with the circumstances. In the age of martyrdom,—viz., the middle of the sixteenth century, when the reformed churches were everywhere in the agony of conflict with the established corruptions of Christianity,—no church had been so zealous or so memorably lavish of her blood as the English. During a second stage of her history, when she was placed so far in a station of security as to find herself militant no longer by secular forces but those of intellect and erudition, she had become the most learned and the most intellectual of all churches; and indeed she might be called not so much the *most* learned, as the *only* learned church,—since even the Papal Church,

* After all, the distinction of the Church of England is even more splendid in right of her potent intellects than of her great scholars. Bellarmine, Baronius, Huet, &c., may possibly confront our Ushers, Sandersons, Lightfoots, and Stillingfleets; though even here, in a numerical sense, the English Church is far the richer. But what antagonists, many or few, can the Church of Rome produce to our Jeremy Taylors and Barrows? The French Bossuets, Fenelons, Bourdaloues, &c., whatever may be thought of their

which ranks nearest to her, has attained to distinction as a body* only through one or two of her many orders,—viz., the Jesuits and the Benedictines. At length, in a third stage, unfortunately for her own dignity and usefulness, the Anglican Church reached a position of absolute repose; the unsettled relations between herself and the Papists were now terminated by the final exclusion of Popish families from the throne; and even the Protestant Dissenters were placed by various acts of toleration in a condition which left them thenceforwards liable to no irritation, active or passive: they could neither irritate effectually, nor be irritated. Under the torpor of this situation, concurring with the taint to our national morals sustained in various ways at the era of the Restoration (which did not purge itself off in less than a century), the English clergy sank to the lowest point of depression in the interval between the English and the French revolutions. They were still the most learned and accomplished clergy by far in the world; in fact, the Popish clergy were, generally speaking, illiterate, all *their* learning being confined to the monastic orders. They were also a body of gentlemen, and useful by their moral examples, their attainments, and their beneficence, as so many centres of civilization dispersed over all the parishes of England. But, at the same time, it must be granted that gradually, from the absolute annihilation of their *militant* condition in a political sense, and the general tone of ease and comfort in their finances, they had become the least of a

meagre and attenuated rhetoric, are one and all the most commonplace of thinkers: not one of them makes any effort after forcible thinking.

spiritual-minded clergy known perhaps in Christendom. The pastoral duties to their flocks were all crowded and depressed into a few periodical formalities and freezing ceremonies: even these were sustained only by custom, by the necessities of canonical obedience, and by official jealousy of intrusion upon their privileged ground by unqualified persons. And this state of things arose, unfortunately, not so much from conscious negligence, as from systematic depression of the pastoral office, and alienation from all vigilant religious sensibility, under the general name of enthusiasm. The delineations, accordingly, which we find of the clerical character in the novels of the first half of the eighteenth century, are such as could not (with every allowance for exaggeration) have been offered as representative pictures at any other period of the church history. At length, however, the evil had reached its height, and a reaction commenced. The Methodists had been originally projected from the Church herself. For one generation, probably, they produced little impression that was externally visible upon the Church. But at length men of family and social consideration, as well as scholars in the two universities, began to join them: the soil was prepared; a vast machinery of religious societies began to get into motion; and a fourth stage was entered of church history, as applied to the character of the clergy. Within the last forty or fifty years, the English clergy in every rank (perhaps even more in the highest than lowest) have passed through a process of silent reformation. A very large infusion of what is called technically "evangelical" principles has been poured into the Church,—into the highest ranks, I repeat,

at least as much as into the lower; and the complexion of the whole body is now so altered, judged by its sermons, tracts, public speeches, support given to religious societies of every denomination, that, by comparison with its own state seventy years ago, it may be called an apostolic church. This is a point which can be determined only by those who have connections which enable them to speak with knowledge; for the mass of public writers know nothing of the real existing Church, but merely echo an invidious clamour now superannuated, and perhaps always grounded in the main upon tithes. However, the immediate purpose I had in this reference to the varying history of the Church, was to show that if the appeal were made to the history or character of the clergy, then the report must be as variable, and speak as variable a language as belongs to the whole range between the self-sacrificing spirit of a primitive martyr and the most absolute dedication to the world. But the creed is a monument that cannot change.

Upon these arguments, and the spirit of these arguments, I pronounce my censor wrong in supposing it any part of my duty to have traced the *conduct* of the Whigs and Tories. My business was with their creed. And to that I now return. My censor has made it necessary that I should do so, having apparently never opened his eyes to the main principle on which my whole theory of our two English constitutional parties is built. I judge this because he has made no objection or demur of any sort to my full and open statement of that theory, and first opposes it by a point-blank contradiction, when I am simply making an application of this theory to a particular

case. The case is that of Mr Pitt, of whom I affirm, that up to a certain stage of the French Revolution he might have smiled approvingly upon its promises (and probably *did* so), not less cordially than any Whig the most ardent —*as* a Whig, and speaking in that character. That restriction must always be borne in mind, because there is nothing to hinder any pure Republican, the most alien to the British constitution, from calling himself a Whig; and many a fierce Republican has done so. Upon this case of illustration,—Mr Pitt's case in relation to the French Revolution,—the censor denies it roundly as a case within the verge of possibility. Mr Pitt smile approvingly upon the French Revolution! impossible! "*He could not*," says the censor; and that is the amount of his reply. Now a blank negation is at any time met sufficiently by a blank re-affirmation. And with respect to this particular negation, as regards the mere question of fact apart from the question of principle, it is notorious that Mr Pitt not only might consistently, but *did* in very deed sympathize with the French Revolution in a degree which made it necessary for Edmund Burke to couch his political vision from the cataract which obscured the sanity of his views. Even in a recent Radical journal (by way of an argument *ad hominem*) the censor will find it noticed, that in the matter of the French Revolution, Burke (though as yet still connected with a *soi-disant* Whig party) "betrayed principles *less popular* than those of the minister; and that afterwards, when Burke (as it was termed) went over to him, the junction took place, not by the former being converted by the latter to anti-popular principles, but by Burke converting the minister to his own anti-jacobinism."

—(Lond. and West. Rev., No. 8; and 51, p. 496, *Art.* Wraxall's Memoirs). The Radical writer of this paper goes on to say (Ibid., p. 497), that "for some time after that event" (viz., the French Revolution), "Pitt *coincided with Fox* in regarding it as auspicious to the friendly relations between France and England,"—words which could not have been more apposite to the present question if they had been expressly written with a view to it, and (which is more important) words in harmony with the entire tenor of the debates in those days, and in equal harmony with all the attested glimpses of Mr Pitt's private sentiments, as expressed either in conversation or in confidential letters.

Here, therefore, at least, the censor will find himself in error as to the question of fact. But, even had it been otherwise, this could not have affected the question of principle there concerned,—viz., that a true Tory, understanding his own principles, let Mr Pitt have done as he would, was bound to rejoice in the first promises of the French Revolution—though, perhaps, to "rejoice with trembling." Was it, or was it not, a resemblance of his own Revolution, to which he by his ancestors had set his seal? If it was, if there were the same great principles acknowledged, of representative government, of limits set to the regal power, of accountability lodged in quarters where it could be enforced, of universal contribution to the national burdens, without immunities for any rank or order, of personal security from summary acts of oppression, open or secret,—if these and other grand cardinal grounds of social liberty were laid down solemnly, and hallowed in the earlier acts of that mighty Revolution, then I affirm that both

Whigs and Tories, supposing them masters of their own original creeds, must in consistency have concurred fervently to an act which was but a republication of their own immortal precedent—that precedent by which they had inaugurated their own political birth as parties. The disturbing lights of present circumstances too often withdraw the attention of all parties, whether political or religious, from their own original principles,—those principles which first confederated them into parties; too often also it happens that, from mere disuse of exercise in first principles, from the total defect of occasions which might adequately call them out (a case which eminently belongs to the prosperous and secure condition of England throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century), men, otherwise the most intelligent, fall into a dim or lukewarm recognition of their own distinguishing creeds; and above all, it has been found continually that the possession of power indisposes a man to admit any principles whatsoever in their perfect authority which are likely to prove personal obstacles. Cromwell was originally a lover of freedom, and perhaps would never have been other than a lover, had freedom not clashed with his personal views. All these reasons might have concurred to make Mr Pitt scowl upon the French Revolution, *had* he scowled, which it is clear that he did not. But no matter for individual examples; it will remain true after all, that the ideal Tory was pledged by his faith to an approbation of the French Revolution in its early stages. And the censor, in contradicting me, has failed to observe that his contradiction is planted in the wrong place: the general inference, that a Tory was bound to sympathise with the earliest

stages of the French Revolution, is already involved in my theory of the relations between Whigs and Tories,—which theory, therefore, and not a casual illustration of it, the censor ought to have impeached.

That he has not done this, I ascribe to his having been thrown off any distinct apprehension of it by the hurried style of reading which is become a mere necessity for a political writer, or even a large political observer, in these days. In this I mean no reproach, for there is a sheer incompatibility between seeing largely of all aspects and accurately of each. So that I have no cause to complain, and do not complain; but the fact is still so, that he has failed to observe my peculiar view of our original constitutional parties, without which he could not do justice to anything I have said,—that theory being the ground of the whole.

This view, therefore, this theory, I shall re-state with amendments,—not merely by way of a *resumé* or recapitulation introductory to what I have to say of Radicalism, but also because in and for itself I contend that my views on this subject are the first which give meaning or coherency to the history of these kingdoms. Let it be understood that I offer my present theory as in defiance of all former theories. I contend that no previous account of Whigs and Tories, of their origin, or of their relations, is self-consistent, or even intelligible; and I contend also that all are historically false. The history of England, and still more that of Scotland, is grossly falsified in all the main circumstances connected with the narrative chapters of Whig and Tory progress, and is thrown into absolute contradiction in its philosophic chapters. Bear with me whilst I reassert my own scheme:

it will contain but little of repetition,—it will not be long. And, at the same time, remember that, if just, it will have a further value than according to its present position,—a value not in relation to fugitive politics, or their more fugitive aspects, but in relation to philosophic and self-consistent history.

I have already made you acquainted with my leading thesis in this speculation,—a thesis which at once changes the whole field and area of the question. It is this: that the kind of opposition between Whig and Tory is not, as the current notions make it, logical,—that is, contradictory each of the other; in the way, for instance, that a Christian and an anti-Christian are opposed,—an Episcopalian and a Presbyterian,—a theist and an atheist. All these denominations and counter-denominations are of such a nature that they obviously include each other. Theism, for instance, being true, Atheism (as a mere rebound of that proposition) must be false. Not only cannot both consist in the same subject, but even in different subjects both cannot be simultaneously true: one must be false (speaking of speculative truth); one must be wrong (speaking of practical). Either of such alternatives being assumed for a substance, the other instantly becomes a shadow. But the opposition between Whig and Tory is not of this kind, as has been universally assumed and argued upon: it is not logical as between *A* and *non-A*, between *is* and *is not*, between true and false, between wrong and right. The opposition is of the same nature as that which takes place in algebra, when quantities equally real, but in opposite direction, are treated as positive and negative. A ship sailing east-

wards is carried by currents certain distances to the west: the motions in one direction you put down as affirmative, those in the other (equally real, observe) as negative, and it matters not which you call affirmative, which negative: so far is there from being any true logical negation in the matter, which would imply one of the two to be necessarily a nonentity; and the opposition between the two is of that nature which can allow them actually to exist in the same subject, though not simultaneously. A still better illustration, because including this circumstance of simultaneity, may be drawn from the case of action and reaction in mechanics, or from that of attraction and repulsion in dynamics; for these forces, though in perfect opposition, are so far from therefore excluding each other, that they cannot exist apart,—each, in fact, exists by and through its antagonist.

In perfect analogy to these cases is the relation between Whig and Tory. But how little this can have been perceived, is evident from the universal language of our political literature, in which the case is treated as one of standing and irreconcileable dissension with regard to the separate pretensions of the Crown and the people. The notion is, not merely that the Whigs carry the popular claims, for example, to a higher point (which might still be a *fixed* point) than the Tories, and that, in the same proportion, these Whigs depress the claims of the Sovereign, but this notion is carried even to the preposterous extremity of supposing each party to seek an *unlimited* extension of privilege for that one among the triple forces of our constitution whose interest it espouses. If this were really so, if it had been the prevailing policy and

the rationale of that policy among the Tories to seek the unconditional depression of the popular interest, and reciprocally of the Whigs to seek the unconditional depression of the Crown, then, indeed, we must acknowledge a blank opposition between the two parties in the main articles of their separate creeds. That an interpretation so idle of the refined differences between two parties, arising in the very bosom of civilization, and at the most intellectual era of the most intellectual of nations,—interpretations so gross of differences so spiritual,—ever could have been entertained by reflective men, is marvellous. Mere orators, and public men with public merits of the popular order, are little qualified to meet any question which lies below the surface,—the opinion of such men is of no authority in the second or third generation from their own day; but that Burke should have so far yielded to the vulgar error as to speak of it in common conversation as a problem still pending and *sub judice*, whether Whigs or Tories were "*in the right*," would be humiliating if it were clearly established. But I doubt the fact: to the philosophic understanding of Burke such an error was impossible. There is an explanation which, whilst it palliates or even cancels the peccant part of his meaning,—that part which seems to countenance the vulgar error,—is equally useful in accounting for the rise of that vulgar error amongst men in general. I will state it immediately.

Meantime, you understand that I deny broadly and universally, and place amongst the vast catalogue of vulgar errors, that notion which attributes any logical opposition to the relations between Whigs and Tories—any such

opposition as would make it necessary, if one were pronounced right, that the other should be pronounced wrong. Both are right; and not only so,—not only can these party differences co-exist without violence to truth, but, as in the mechanical law formerly referred to, of action and reaction, they are *able to exist only by means of their co-existence.* The true view of their relations is this, that each party forms one hemisphere; jointly they make up the total sphere. They divide, it is true, the functions of the constitution,—one party administering the popular or democratic, the other administering the anti-popular or timocratic functions. But in dividing the functions, they still distribute their care over the whole. In so exquisite a system of balances as are at work in the British constitution, there is a constant reason for fear that in one function or other the equilibrium should be disturbed. Consequently, it is fit that to every organ through which the constitution acts or is acted upon, a vigilant jealousy should be directed. This jealousy cannot, by any possibility, be rendered so keen and effective, if lodged comprehensively and indiscriminately, for all parts of the constitution, in the same general hands, charged alternately with the duty of repressing the Crown and the people, as it would be if assigned dramatically, by separate parts or castings, to separate agents. Human nature itself would make it a self-defeating jealousy, if it were necessary for the same man to vary his own passions to suit the varying circumstances; and the task of training his feelings this day in one direction, and to-morrow in another, would be a mere impossibility for any man of steady feelings,—such feelings as it could be otherwise

right to rely on. Habits are the great pledge for the due performance of duties; and habits, *to be* habits, cannot be supposed applying themselves to variable or contradictory impulses. Hence it is that the Whigs have charged themselves with one class of duties to the British constitution, and the Tories with another. Not that I would wish to represent this wise division of labour as having been originally prescribed by human foresight, but that, under the wise leading of human nature, and under the natural tendencies of human passions or interests, things having once settled into this arrangement or into this tendency, the result was seen and improved by the deliberate judgment of parties. An advocate would not feel himself entitled (or, if entitled, not reconciled) to the practice of urging the presumptions strongly against an accused person simply by the balancing *right* of that person to take off the effect of evidence, and in the utmost degree that he could to throw dust in the eyes of the court; but perhaps he *may* feel reconciled to this by the consciousness that the very extremity of this rigour on his own part, and the anticipation of it, like the intensity of a mechanic force, will be the very best pledge in the long run for a corresponding extremity of effort in the reaction. And thus the guardians of the Crown prerogative are warranted in pressing this prerogative to the very uttermost tension, by the certainty that thus, more effectually than by all the bribes in this world, they will ensure the permanent reaction of the Democratic party in defence of popular privilege. But that, in the very midst of this bisection of the public spirit into two polar forces of reciprocal antagonism for the sake of a steadier, stronger,

and more continuous action, there does, in fact, preside latently and in the rear a transcendent regard to the total interest in the most comprehensive sense; that neither party wishes the weight of the other party to be diminished, much less annihilated, as is often imagined, by an excess of blundering in respect of principles (for as to personal influence, and the question of Ministerial power, *that* is quite another thing);—all these truths flow like so many corollaries from that great consummating act by which, at the same moment, our constitution was finally established, and our two great constitutional parties originally inaugurated. You understand, of course, that I mean the Revolution of 1688–9. For let me ask any man who clings to the old notion, that the Whigs and Tories are hostile parties (hostile, I mean, as depositaries of principle, not in the very different sense of parties seeking against parties possessing power), and that they wish (or have reason to wish) each other's destruction; such a man let me ask how he will reconcile this notion of essential hostility with the unanimity and absolute harmony which they manifested in the most critical and important measure, the measure most fitted to divide men otherwise hostile, of all which ever have agitated this nation. Did the Whigs and the Tories adjust the measure of the Revolution in the way of a capitulation—that is, by mutual concessions, by reciprocal sacrifices of interests which had confessedly held a high party value? Was the Revolution, in the sense of Roman law, a *transactio*,—that is, was it a compromise in which both parties, under a sense of their situation and doubtful power, yielded up some capital principles? Nothing of the sort. Never was there a

measure to which both parties more cordially or unreservedly concurred in all that touched upon principles, for the articles on which they much differed were articles of a personal pressure; as, for instance, should the nephew of the exiled king stand first and single in the substitution; or, 2*dly*, be associated with that king's eldest daughter (in which case, undoubtedly, there was a personal wrong to the younger daughter and to her children); or, 3*dly*, be coldly remanded to his original place in the line of succession? These questions were certainly personal questions, and merely personal, for the least unscrupulous of the deliberators never meant to raise a precedent, in the case of calling William to the throne, that should be construed in favour of nephews generally by preference to daughters. On every question of principle, all questions which concerned the rights of kings, of people, of the church, the mode of administration, the exercise of the prerogative, and the tenure of property, both parties coalesced, and both were equally forward. No capital opposition was raised but from a third party, connected by no ties of principle whatever, but purely by private considerations, either of fidelity, gratitude, or disinterested attachment to the king's person—viz., Jacobites. And it must also be remembered, that in other instances of opposition, *not* capital, the parties were often neither Whigs, Tories, nor Jacobites; for there were many in both Houses who professed neither the great principles of the two former parties, nor the personal bias of the latter.

Here then I take my stand: the Revolution, taken with its commentary in the trial of Sacheverell, was the great record of our constitution; an act declaratory and

enactory; for at the same time it proclaimed and republished former principles of freedom, defined and limited all which were of dubious construction, and solemnly enacted those integrations of our social system which had been hitherto entrusted respectfully (but, as recent experience had shown, dangerously) to the royal forbearance or the ministerial responsibility. By this great act were ascertained for ever the true *locus* of each function belonging to a state: the power of the sword (so agitating a topic of dispute forty odd years before); the power of the purse; the power of legislation (which the last years of Charles II., his avowed intentions, and the insinuations of James in his very first speech from the throne, had threatened to centre in the king and his privy council); the power of the press and of confederate petition; the municipal powers all over the kingdom, and, by consequence, the unfettered power of choosing juries (both of which had, by implication, been assailed in the *Quo warranto* writs of Charles II.); the powers of the Church and of freehold property as against the Crown; and finally (to omit many other great stipulations of present or future consequence), the executive power in its pretensions to a right of dispensation, and indirectly to the maintenance of a standing force. To this great charter of our rights, as collected from the written documents and the acts of the Convention and subsequent Parliament, who were the parties? who the main movers and authors of the measure itself which led to these senatorial acts,—viz., of the great secession from the reigning king and the adhesion to the Prince of Orange? Simply the Whigs and Tories; and had either party proved recusant, instead of a blood-

less revolution, without even a civil commotion worth notice, or the disturbance of individual rights, we must have had a civil war. The inference as to the unity of Whigs and Tories in every matter of principle, I need not repeat. But one thing I must add, that this unity is the more evident, because (as I shall immediately show) the Whig and Tory parties were first ascertained by the Revolution; or rather, it would be more accurate to say that these parties, in their full maturity, were a twin-birth with that great event. And I hold it a mistake to sup pose that Whigs and Tories were formally opposed to each other as antagonist forces previously to that era. The word *Whig* was often used, but the word Tory hardly ever; and the first field in which they were brought into direct antithesis was in the north or Protestant part of Ireland; whence they passed to Dublin; and from Dublin, about the year of the Revolution, to London.

Now, upon this theory of the absolute unity between Whigs and Tories as to principle, and their bisection into parts of mutual repulsion only for practical effects, it will be demanded, Whence then comes the universal belief that the Whig is every way opposed to the Tory? I answer, from these three causes:—

1. From the original separation for the purpose already explained,—viz., the more entire dedication of one agency to one class of constitutional objects.

2. Still more from this cause, that once separated into distinct bodies, on this principle of the division of labour, each body acting separately, as was natural, in a distinct province, they became marked out to the sovereign as two parties having distinct personal connections; and by

means of these connections having varying forces of property and borough interest, and national influence amongst them. Hence arose a reason to the king for choosing his ministers now amongst one party, now amongst the other, —with no view to any sort of principles, good or bad, but simply to the party connections. Thus it was that the Whigs and Tories came to be viewed under new and shifting relations as Ministerial or in Opposition, *Ins* or *Outs*, men having power and men seeking power.

3. Even apart from this relation to the momentary possession of power and place, the simple circumstance of uniform confederation for the same line of policy (however unconnected that policy might be with principles of any quality, and however disconnected within itself), nay, the mere force of names as rallying points for men in public acts, would again tend to disturb and confuse the original distinctions on which Whig and Tory parties proceeded, viz., the distinctions of function,—that is to say, the attention of men would be far more frequently called to the *nominal* distinctions of party connection, from acting in concert with Nottingham, Bolingbroke, Oxford, or on the other side with Marlborough, Somers, Godolphin, than with any profounder characteristics. And these *nominal* party unities are quite sufficient to explain the whole habit of attributing to Whig and Tory that kind of hostility which never can attach to them *as* such, but do and will always attach to them in other superadded characters: first, of partisans confederated under two different sections of the aristocracy; and, secondly, of men in the king's service or out of that service, and therefore, by the necessities of parliamentary tactics, in oppo-

sition. Seeing that Whigs and Tories were always in fact opposed to each other, it was natural enough to suppose them opposed *as* Whigs and Tories; for though in that character they were really united (except as to the separate mode of applying their principles), yet, as this one difference of practical functions had availed naturally to keep them distinct and aloof, it led by consequence to the other differences of personal connection, and taking or not taking office.

These distinctions justify* Burke: when he spoke of it as a thing not decided whether his own party or the Tories were in the right, he meant doubtless to speak of neither with any reference to principles, but simply in their character of parties abetting a different line of public policy,—one, suppose, a warlike, the other a pacific policy; but neither having any the least connection with popular or anti-popular creeds. In reality, if a foreigner were to enter as a student upon a course of English history for the two last centuries, he would find himself continually at a loss to understand the *rationale* of our party distinc-

* And also, I submit to my censor that the same distinctions justify me in a passage where he supposes a contradiction. I speak of the Whigs as immortal and co-eternal with the constitution; elsewhere I speak of them as a decaying party. Certainly: in the first sense, I speak of them as the assertors *speculatively* (in conjunction with Tories) of certain great principles embodied in the British Constitution, and as the assertors *practically* (in reaction to the Tories) of one moiety of these principles,—the democratic moiety. In the second sense I speak of them as a body of partisans, in or out of power, opposed to another body out or in. In this latter sense, I find many orthodox Radical authorities for holding the Whigs to be a party almost defunct.

tions. He would find that the vast majority of public acts ascribed to the Tories, and said by the historian to have been opposed by the Whigs, had no discoverable connection with any principles at all that bear upon either popular or aristocratic pretensions. Many other cases he would find in which the Tories had taken the popular side, the Whigs the aristocratic. For instance, Mr Fox's India Bill, by denying all control over Indian affairs to the proprietors of India stock, certainly treaded upon an aristocratic path. Again, his theory in the Regency question was better suited to the atmosphere of old France than of old England; whilst Mr Pitt's proceeded upon a due regard to the democratic influences in our mixed constitution. Mr Fox would have had us believe that the mere fact of an incapacity in the sovereign, when solemnly put on record, at once devolved the regency upon the heir-apparent, as an estate that had lapsed. Mr Pitt, with a noble contempt of self-interest, which obviously pointed all men's ambition towards the rising sun, insisted that a regency, and every place in a regency, must be the mere creation of Parliament. In this instance there is but too much reason to suspect Mr Fox of having complied with his private bias in favour of the existing Prince of Wales. But there are other cases in which the Whig party, without even Mr Fox's apology, promoted measures violently opposed to their traditional principles (as guardians more peculiarly of democratic rights), by clamorously coming forward to abet the most conspicuous tyrant in history. They fought against the Peninsular warfare, or any other mode for showing our sympathy with outraged Spain, even to a point of *acharnement*.

But this they did, it will be pleaded, not in their character of Whigs, but as opponents, by hook or by crook, to the Ministerial policy of those days. Exactly so: that is the very thing I am saying; and the foreign student here supposed would very soon discover that in a vast majority of cases neither Whig nor Tory did or could model his conduct upon any system of Whig or Tory principles that ever was conceived, and precisely because the questions are rare indeed which bear any relation whatever either to popular pretensions or to anti-popular. And from all this I deduce the following inference,—that the common notion (that notion which Mr Burke was assuming in the case referred to) of an original and essential hostility between Whig and Tory first took its rise, and has since sustained itself, by observing them in constant opposition as an *acting* party: which circumstance has availed naturally to obscure the primary truth, as I shall always maintain it to be, that as a *speculative* party, as a party appealing to political principles, they are the very same party under two different phases,—one looking to one interest of the constitution, the other to the other; but phases, surely, not arguing any essential differences or hostility, since hostility there can be none between different parts of the same constitution.

At this point, therefore, you will observe, that if the censor persists in rejecting all appeal to creeds as of no importance, if he persists in urging the appeal to the acts of the two parties, in that case, although I deny utterly the pretence that the Tory acts, taken comprehensively, have been less friendly to civil liberty than those of their antagonists, and although I have shown in some cases (and

might show in many others) that upon the whole the Whigs have manifested a much greater insensibility to such interests in any case when they happened to clash with personal party objects,—yet, if it had been otherwise, as any such hostility to freedom must have arisen from the particular position of the Tories as the king's ministers at the moment, and not from their peculiar principles,—the censor has precisely the same evil to apprehend from the Whigs, now that their time has come for occupying power and place. For instance, Mr Pitt, in a period of war upon a fearful scale, and afterwards with much less reason his successors, in a period of profound peace, suspended the *Habeas Corpus* Act. Well, no man can imagine that either one or the other ministry did this as Tories; they did it as the persons then carrying on the government, and responsible to the nation for the security of towns, districts, arsenals, and generally of the public peace. Any danger which menaces interests so vast and so feverishly susceptible of derangement, is likely to be exaggerated, and to prove a trying temptation to him upon whose shoulders the total responsibility has settled. And, on the other hand, it is a homage to public freedom which costs a man absolutely nothing, to depreciate the danger and the necessities of the crisis when he happens to be himself released from all pressure of the responsibility, and when the utmost realisation of the dangers apprehended would but serve his own nearest interest by loading his antagonist with blame. Take an illustration from rioting; innumerable have been the local riots in this free country, and almost as innumerable the shades of conduct and the varieties of forbearance amongst the magistrates.

Some, from native timidity and want of nerve, have proceeded at once to the very harshest extremities. Others scarcely would find any circumstances sufficient to warrant the application of military force. And wherefore these differences? Would any man attempt to explain them out of Whig and Tory principles,—as though the generous, forbearing, and confiding magistrate must naturally be a Whig, and the timid one a Tory? Obviously, they are due to differences of bodily temperament and of moral disposition. But in the case which called for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, the responsibility was on a scale far transcending that which can have ever attached to a local magistrate; and, perhaps, under the same circumstances the boldest of men and the most fervent Whig would have adopted the same course—supposing, always, that he was under the same *onus* of responsibility.

Making these distinctions, and clearing themselves from the confusion so often used to darken these questions, between the acts which are done in the superinduced character of king's minister, and those which are done in the original character of Tory,—every honest Radical must feel that there is not one atom of difference between the two parties, except what arises from being *in* or *out*, which difference is now altogether in favour of the Tories. Can it be pretended for one instant that the Whig aristocracy are less an aristocracy? Are they less decorated with titles, stars, and garters? Did they, before the Reform Bill, traffic less habitually in boroughs? At this very moment, do the Whig nobility and landed proprietors less regularly avail themselves of their natural influence over the voters on their estates? Do they, or ever did

they, less firmly support the practice of entails, or any other connected with primogeniture? Do they less disdainfully recoil from unequal alliances in their families? Many more such questions might be asked; and, considering the sort of answer which must be given to them, an honest Radical must blush scarlet.

Having stated with rigour my theory of the relations between the two great constitutional parties of England, it may be useful to say a word or two on the case treated historically; by which means I shall be able at the same time to support what I have said, and to apply myself with better effect to Radicalism. The history of this subject must naturally be confused when the theory is false. You must be well aware that the first Earl of Strafford and the first Earl of Clarendon, Lord Treasurer Southampton, and the first Duke of Ormond, are not unfrequently called *Tories*. Mr Fox, with all the benefit of modern research, does not scruple to allow himself in that mode of expression, with what propriety we shall see; and indeed no writer whom I have yet seen, whether historical or directly political, escapes the same leading errors. The fact of so very general a consent in this direction might have weighed with me to suspect my own grounds, were it not that the palpable error, which I have so repeatedly had occasion to press upon your notice, of neglecting (but rather, I should say, of overlooking) the capital distinction between a party considered as a depository of certain principles, and the same party as a depository of ministerial power, entitles me to slight all my predecessors for so much of their opinions as arises out of this oversight. The justice of criticism cannot refuse me

this concession, that the thousand reviews of any question whatsoever, conducted in perfect ignorance of some capital distinction, are of meaner authority than any single review written under the benefit of this guiding light. It will be evident, indeed, to any thoughtful interpreter of English history, that he who can deliberately call Lord Clarendon a Tory, uses that word in a sense so vague and unlimited, that Cicero, Atticus, or even Marcus Brutus, might be termed Tories with equal propriety; as, on the other hand, with a view to the democratic agencies which he employed for his own elevation, Cæsar might be termed a Whig. But such a latitudinarian use of these designations would end in conveying a mere loose analogy, in a case where he must be supposed in quest of a close and special determination. Amongst the decorations of rhetoric, such an application of party distinctions may have its value; but severer purposes demand a corresponding severity in the terminology: low thinking only can allow of a lax use of language.

The rise of parties in England may be traced back to the reign of Charles the First. It is true that, before that era, the rudiments were forming, and large materials were gathering, for the future construction of organized parties. But as yet they were slenderly combined, and too exclusively *personal* in their objects. I have elsewhere ascribed the growth of Parliamentary power and dignity, which advanced chiefly in the reign of the first James, but manifested itself as a *conscious* strength not very emphatically before the reign of the first Charles, to the large expansion of a *gentry*, or junior nobility, throughout the sixteenth century, in consequence of the inroads

made upon the great feudal aristocracy by the sagacious measures of Henry VII.,* supported as they were by measures having the same tendency on the part of his son. The most direct of these measures, a prohibitory measure, attacked the mercenary supporters of aristocracy,—the standing *nucleus* of armies; the other, a permissive measure, withdrew the props from the main basis on which

* It must be evident that from the beginning of the twelfth century, the English aristocracy had possessed a latent strength which was constantly and instantly called into powerful vitality upon the least encouragement from any symptom of weakness in the Crown. And this strength was apparently a growing strength up to the latter end of the fifteenth century. Looking back through a period of less than one hundred years from the battle of Bosworth to the minority of Richard II., Henry VII. could not fail to observe that four kings (and in effect five) had been obliged to fight for their crowns with rebellious subjects; and that in reality some of the more potent amongst these subjects, as the Percys and the Nevilles, must have felt that the crown had been held as a mere donation from themselves. The evil was imminent and deadly. His own crown was held by the same tenure; and already, perhaps, the Stanleys and Mowbrays might be revolving new revolutions and more profitable treasons. The evil was to be cured by attacking its causes. What were they? Precisely the same as were employed in the latter days of the Republic by the colossal nobility of Rome,—viz., enormous estates, landed and in money; secondly, schools of gladiators. It has, perhaps, been too little noticed that all the potentates amongst the Roman nobility kept what was in fact a body-guard, sometimes a considerable army, in the *scholæ gladiatoriæ*,—ostensibly kept for civic purposes (the public shows were held such), but in reality as a "strong back" to purposes of personal ambition. Cæsar, besides his gladiators, possessed one entire legion composed of his own hired servants. Exactly corresponding to these foundations of power were those of the English nobility. The *retainers* were the *gladiators*; and the

the aristocratic power was built,—viz., territorial wealth locked up into masses by the spirit of ancient usage and of legislation. The same measures, applied in other directions, were pursued through the reigns of the succeeding century, until their operation had been universally diffused and made effective. Out of the partial ruins which followed was recomposed a new order,—an order which was first known in England,—viz., an inferior nobility connected upwards and downwards, dignified enough by descent, in a large proportion, and by property, to maintain a concurrent political authority with the *haute noblesse*, and yet popular enough in its sympathies, by means of the continual interfusion kept up between itself and the working order, to stand forward as a general trustee for protecting the interests and for uttering the voice of the Commons of the land. That order had certainly existed before the revolution of Henry VII., but in too narrow and uncombined a form to support an independent authority and settled influence upon the legislation of the land or the administration of the government. Two circumstances gave at intervals to the House of Commons a premature character of grandeur and independence, but an unsteady character, because

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estates, though for different reasons, were equally inalienable, and frozen, as it were, into abiding masses. The power could never be dissolved where the estate could not. With one hand, therefore, and by a direct blow, Henry attacked the *gladiatorial schools* of England; with the other, and by a side blow, he sapped the territorial power. And his son followed up these blows by similar attacks directed against the same power, lodged in spiritual hands.

as yet insufficiently supported by the intrinsic power of property and the sanction of public opinion; and these were, 1*st*, the occasional necessity in which the Crown found itself of breaking the odium attached to unpopular measures by sharing it with a popular body; 2*dly*, the interest of particular sovereigns to obtain a guarantee for arrangements on behalf of their children which were not of a nature to be fulfilled in their own lifetimes. The testamentary settlements of kings were then of a more aspiring and comprehensive character, so as to require a corresponding superiority of character in the witnesses and the trustees charged with the executory duties. The pride of prerogative, doubtless, must have struggled against this humiliating appeal (as it would then be felt); but such feelings naturally yielded to parental affection, to paramount interest, and in some instances to the necessities of the situation. But in spite of these casual and momentary exaltations given to the character of Parliament, by which it seemed at times to anticipate its present station of authority, the instances are far more numerous, and of a picturesque liveliness, which recall us to the general tone of depression and conscious inferiority of function marking the demeanour of the Lower House to the Crown, and even to its fellow-labourers of the Upper House. The censor thinks I have exaggerated the features of this inferiority, and he notices particularly the two cases of religion and taxation as those in which the Commons exhibited a jealous and haughty reserve in their intercourse with the other members of the Legislature. True; and as those were exactly the cases which I had myself excepted, I do not see why

the censor should imply that I had overlooked them. We might add the case of their own privileges, in which the Commons manifested a punctilious rigour at all times. But upon questions of foreign policy they ventured with the timid step of an aggressor; and from all such intrusions, as well as from those of still more delicate character, into the privileged recesses of the court or the royal household, the House of Commons was harshly, insolently, and sometimes ferociously repelled. There are cases even in the sixteenth century of members suffering capital punishment for pushing their inquiries too curiously or too presumptuously into the conduct, past or to come, of royal personages. Not until the era of James I. did the Parliament assume the masculine tone of a national senate; not until that of his son was this tone so systematically sustained and mutually understood that on either side menacing eyes began to be visible—louring fronts, and the gathering elements arranging themselves for hostility. During this whole period (the period from the accession of the Scottish family to the imperial throne up to the termination of the civil war, and for the eight years which intervened between that termination and the supremacy of Oliver Cromwell), that is, during a period of fifty-one years, the minds of men were in the most intense fermentation; crude and extreme notions were cherished upon each side, as was inevitable from that sort of hostility which *could* make its appeal to the brutal decision of the sword. Between extremes so determinate as these there could not be any compromise, nor (according to the language of that day) any "*temperament*,"—that is, neither that sort of compromise which

arises from reciprocal sacrifices, where so many principles are adopted from A, and an equal number (or equal weight) from anti-A; for this would be a treaty of equality which cannot be supposed to take place amongst parties standing on such unequal grounds,—one the conqueror, the other conquered: nor, again, that sort of compromise which arises from a *tertium quod*,—ideas which partake equally of the two hostile ideas, what logicians style a *medium participationis;* for this sort of treaty presupposes an adjustment and harmonious equilibrium of principles such as cannot so well be the cause as the effect of a peace between the parties. The civil war raged for nearly three years,—beginning in the autumn of 1642, ending virtually with the battle of Naseby about the middle of June 1645.* Then came an interval of peace for three years, interrupted by the short Scottish inroad of 1648, defeated at Preston, which was, in fact, but one day's fighting (with a little episode on the Thames and in Essex). Then came another peace of two years, followed by the entrance of Charles II. on the stage of Scotland, his coronation, the short campaign of 1650, terminated,

* After this battle nothing beyond a few skirmishes took place in the open field, or what, in modern phrase, are called *affairs*. That of Sir Jacob Astley's cavalry on the last day of the year, according to the existing calendar (viz., March 24, 1646), was absolutely the last movement,—no arrears even of the war surviving, except the formal submission of such garrisons as had not been previously reduced. In fact, therefore, Naseby terminated the war; and that occurred about thirty-two months after the first shot was fired at Edgehill. I mention this, because I have found universally such incorrect notions to prevail about the duration of the war, and still more so of Cromwell's ascendancy.

in effect, by the battle of Dunbar, and next year the summary campaign of Worcester. This makes up the whole of the war, which would not, all put together, make more than three years' actual state of war, apart from Ireland, as far as England or English armies were concerned. And yet most people suppose the whole period of twenty years, from the convening of the Long Parliament in November 1640 to the restoration of Charles II., to have been a belligerent period. And Cromwell, who did not ascend to the formal supremacy until thirteen years after the opening of this period, and died twenty months before its close, the same people generally imagine to have governed throughout the whole or nearly the whole of it. However, though absolute oppression of the public voice did not take effect for anything approaching to the duration commonly supposed, and though the war itself was unexpectedly short, and therefore the plea for anything like martial law could not be long, still it is certain that partly the expectation of war (which, in fact, but for the heavy amercements by fine and sequestration, would have been a reasonable expectation), and partly the simulated expectation of war as a plea for keeping up a standing army, had the effect of stifling that free exercise of thought which might have resulted in the organisation of regular constitutional parties at an earlier period. After the establishment of the Protectorate there was an end of all hopes in that direction, until peace and non-military government were restored with Charles II.

This reign has been described most justly by Sir J. Dalrymple as the least easy to interpret of all which compose our history. It is the reign, *par eminence*, of plots,

conspiracies, cabals, and intrigues. And yet it will be evident, on a little consideration, that it is not a reign dignified by constitutional parties fully organised. And yet it is true that some regular tendencies began now to shape themselves towards that consummation. Many great principles of the Constitution had now been ascertained, particularly the leading one of the king's vicarious responsibility in the persons of his ministers. This principle had not been even understood by Charles I. He considered it an insult to himself that his ministers should be called to account, exactly of that kind which any master of a family conceives offered in the attempt to scrutinize his household arrangements. That, in a subject, was seditious insolence. Did he then mean that the accountability lay in himself? That was treason. And thus there was absolutely no hope left amongst those who adhered to Charles's doctrine, nor any use in laws, however good, which after all were left to an irresponsible administration. For so little had been gained with that order of men by all the terrific experience of the last twenty years, that the act which they continued to deplore most was the judicial execution of Strafford,—not for the individual wrong, which *was* a wrong (considering the law on the one hand, and his acts on the other), but for the wrong done to the character with which he was clothed, of king's minister. However, that most men had been weaned from this way of thinking appears from the case of Charles's sons; even James in his Memoirs frequently quotes, and sometimes in its constitutional meaning, the new formula which embodies this doctrine of ministerial responsibility (viz., that the

king can do no wrong); and as to Charles II., he not only acknowledged it in outward show, but practically gave way to it on several occasions. Other advances had been of the last importance. Especially, at the very moment of the Restoration, the last wrecks of the king's feudal revenue and feudal influence had been given up, so that under any ordinary circumstances the power of the sword (now at length justly settled in the king) became an empty name without the concurrence of the people; that is, in effect, the power was finely balanced and divided. These advances led to a further advance,—viz., not the mere doctrinal concession of a use in Parliaments, but to the practical necessity of holding them. And, again, the special rights of one branch of Parliament, particularly that of impeachment, were ascertained. All these were constitutional advances; and as to individual laws, more were passed in this despotic reign of importance to some capital interest of the subject, than in any which had preceded. So much so, that the year 1679 has been fixed on by one eminent writer, with the sanction of Mr Fox, as "the period at which our constitution had reached its greatest theoretical perfection," notwithstanding the accompanying acknowledgment, which also Mr Fox quotes, "that the times immediately following were times of great practical oppression." It may be that this notion of the year 1679 being the culminating epoch of our constitution, may have been Mr Fox's reason for adopting the year 1680, with Rapin, as the era at which the party distinction of Whig and Tory first came into use. He can hardly be supposed to have felt much respect for Rapin's reason, which is so truly absurd as to remind one

of the old Joe Millar story, which represents a traveller as saying, "What do you call this place—Lincoln? Ay; you may well call it lincoln; for I never was so pestered with fleas in my life." Pretty much as Lincoln is thus supposed to arise out of the word *fleas*, so (according to Rapin) do the words Whig and Tory arise out of *addresser* and *abhorrer;* for he gives no better reason for referring Whig and Tory to the year 1680, than that in this year arose the momentary distinction between those who, upon principle, chose to address the king on a certain occasion, and those who chose to express their abhorrence of that principle. Mr Fox will appear to have somewhat more reasonable grounds for this preference of 1680, as the true era of our great party distinctions, if he were accurate in representing the previous era as that which had ripened our constitution. But a slight glance at the condition of public affairs at that moment, and the relations between the several organs of the state, as well as between the existing parties, will convince you that, so far from all confusions in theory having then settled down into place and order, the very chaos of all political elements was actually brooding over the various parties which distracted the state, and all parties in positions so anomalous, and the rationale of the complex movements so difficult to be deciphered even by us at this day, who overlook all the game, that it would have puzzled both Œdipus and the Sphynx combined to guess at the result. We had then a king who hung loose upon the world, unpledged to posterity by any care for his successor, for he had no legitimate child; and all other pretensions falling short of that, did not so much interest as distract

him. We had, besides females, four male pretenders to the throne, all liable to exclusion according to any claim that had yet been created; except that one who, upon prudential grounds, was most liable to exclusion, and against whom a formal Parliamentary exclusion had been actually urged. These pretenders were—two natural sons of the king, his nephew, and his brother. Neither were these pretensions mere verbal demonstrations; for all of them, as we learn from Barillon, the French ambassador, had parties in and out of Parliament actively supporting their claims. We had a public, in all that part of it which concerned itself with politics, not only corruptible, not only corrupted, but even the object of fierce rivalry amongst the several corrupters. The King of France bribed* the King of England, his brother, his ministers, &c., and at the same time bribed all those who were, had been, or might be, conspirators against this King of England. He bribes even the great patriots, and amongst them Algernon Sidney. He bribes the existing Parliament against the king, and the king against all future Parliaments. He bribes especially against Spain and Holland; Spain, again, offers to bid against the bribes of France; and Holland, through the Prince of Orange, at one time also bribes the King of England. The King of

* In estimating the amount of these bribes, as in all other references to French money at that time, there is a gross mistake made by taking the *livre* at its modern value of tenpence. Thus, in various books now lying open before me upon the reign of Louis XIV., in English translations, the constant version of *a million of livres* is L.40,000, whereas it should be L.80,000, or very little less.

France, moreover, bribes a great English minister; but hearing of another man who will undertake to ruin him, he gives this man a bill for about L.8000, made payable so many months after the ruin of the other man; but when the bill falls due, he pays it with a discount of 50 per cent., on the allegation to the indorsee that the man had been only half ruined. Even in this scene of confusion, it will be difficult to descry any place or possibility for fixed constitutional parties to stand and act with systematic purpose. But, to look a little further, we find the King of England himself planning a scheme for driving one part of his subjects into rebellion; and upon this methodical calculation, that he might thus have a plausible pretext for raising an army, which, once levied, he would not need to disband until it should suit his own pleasure. We find the same king, to evade the new doctrine of ministerial responsibility, drawing up a treaty with his own hands, and sealing it with a pocket seal. We find the brother of this king, when exasperated at his banishment from court, protesting, not in one, but in a score of letters, that he saw no hope for himself but in a civil war,—which, accordingly, he determines to raise in Scotland and Ireland. Whereupon, by the very next post, the King of France begs that his Highness will not forget, in such a case, the old connection of Louis and Co.; that he has a large assortment of arms upon his hands, and provisions in abundance, which he will immediately ship off to his order. But happening, in a few posts after, to hear that a republican army is likely to do a little business in the same article of civil war, and precisely against his Highness, he desires his ambassador at

London to wait upon the gentlemen at the head of the concern, and declare how much pleasure it will give him to be favoured with their commands; both offers being, as is evident from the confidential communications now exposed to public view, perfectly sincere. However, you will say, in the midst of this general political depravity, though most of the party connections were at best merely personal, still there might be some small body of men obscured from separate notice by acting at different times with different men, and acting indiscriminately with all at intervals, according to any views they had of what was best for the moment, and under the circumstances, who might keep alive within their little circle some recognition of what was due to the constitution. And here might lurk the salt of regeneration—the nucleus of true believers—the original Whigs and Tories. But I believe you will find that the very enormity of evil in our political system of those days expresses itself peculiarly in this, that all parties almost of necessity took the form of personal parties. This arose out of the fact that our greatest political danger, that of Popery, in the prevailing circumstances of Europe, was then actually incarnated; for it took a personal shape and substance in the Duke of York. Had the nation been Popish, or inclined to Popery, the case would have been very different. But as things were, and with the certainty that the nation would pull one way and its future king another,—about which king, moreover, there was no one fact so absolutely made out as his sublime obstinacy, and his desperate determination to sacrifice the whole world to his absurd conscience,—the danger was assuredly no trifle or chimera. Hence you

see that all parties, cabals, factions, in this reign had been pointed to personal objects. The great events of the reign—the Popish Plot and the Exclusion Bill—were both personal and hurled at the same person. And coming, lastly, to the two great parties, what were they denominated? Not surely Whig and Tory?—that is not the designation which you hear of them: no; but the *Country Party* and the *Court Party*. Now, then, I ask, What was the Country Party? It was so-called upon a sort of double meaning; for it was the party composed chiefly of country gentlemen, men living upon rural estates, and it was the party which professed country, *i. e.*, patriotic views. And of what elements did this party consist? Chiefly and originally of High-church men,—men who leaned too much to the kingly prerogative, and strenuous haters of what were called Commonwealth men. Now, under this Country Party were gathered (see Dalrymple and K. James's Memoirs) all those who were then styled Republicans, as well as those who maintained the divine right of kings in the utmost extremity. I might pursue this subject farther, but I have said enough; the fact may be shown from the records of those days. Whatever may be said by more recent writers, the two great parties had no public existence until that great event out of which they grew; and *by* that they must be measured. For though the names were adopted from other quarters, they were adjusted, on their introduction into a *public* use in England, to a meaning which designated fixed relations to the constitution; and, detached from those relations, they have no import at this day; and those relations they fill up and exhaust.

Now, if this be so, then the Radicals must bear a relation to some other constitution; and, indeed, they now avow that the form of government to which they give their affections is a pure democracy. If this is generally avowed by the Radicals, why spend any words in deducing it by any detail of argument or of historical deduction? But it is *not* avowed generally as yet; though doubtless the tendency is in that direction, and upon any national encouragement it would be avowed universally. Meantime this doctrine, however kept in the rear, and in military language *refused* to the gross public,—viz., the doctrine that all they are doing has for its object some other and different constitution, some other and different mode of administering the government, and not at all any possible improvement of our existing constitution or government,—this doctrine is the esoteric one of the Radicals who are in the secret. And it is useless, as with regard to *them* to discuss any mode or degree of improvements applied to the old forms. They must all be discussed on another footing,—viz., as with reference to a pure democracy.

Even in that shape, even *as* a pure democracy, Radicalism will not be able to exist upon a very extended scale. There are strong reasons for believing that, upon that one principle of Universal Suffrage, Radicalism would and must dissolve any extensive community. England would break up into small confederations,—some Radical, some half Radical; and even then as a primary condition demanding the expulsion (as so often occurred in the little Greek republics) of the aristocratic orders. Riches could not co-exist with Radical forms; for the possession of

wealth infers anti-radical feelings. The union of several rich men would give local triumph to aristocratic notions, aided, I mean, by the indirect influence which cannot but accompany wealth under any arrangements of law, property, or usage. Even apart from the case of wealth, the democracy of universal suffrage would be too intense for those but one or two steps raised in the social condition. A state of civic privilege which consists in the denial of all privilege, would forfeit the main springs of hope, fear, and ambition, by which even the purest patriotism is nursed; and the result would be that Radicalism, even to maintain itself, must relax the sternness of its principles, and thus soon make way for the gradual restoration of all which it had destroyed. This would be its *euthanasy;* but other and more fearful agonies would too probably step in for hastening the catastrophe: these it would be unpleasant to dwell upon. But the catastrophe itself, by some agency or other, it seems impossible to evade, unless upon one of two assumptions,—either upon the assumption of a coercion from without, which Radicalism disclaims, or on the assumption that all men were philosophers, which we all of us disclaim.

NOTES TO VOLUME XV.

ON THE PLACING OF NOTES, BY MR DE QUINCEY.

In general it has struck me as a proper and useful distinction amongst notes—that, when they arise by a sort of spontaneity from the text, and are auxiliary to the entire intelligibility of the text, as *that* again inversely to *them*, it is better to place them at the foot of the page: but, on the other hand, wheresoever a note is not so much an integrating part of the text—algebraically speaking, is not a coefficient with the text for interpreting the total sense of the passage, but rather an alien offshoot from the text, such as (if much prolonged) would tend to what we call an *Excursus* (*i.e.*, a digressional notice of some topic naturally suggested by the text, but nowise essential to its unity and entire intelligibility),—in all cases of that nature, I should myself feel disposed to place them at the end. In the former case, short notes co-operate with the reader's efforts to master the entire sense of the text; in the latter, they disturb and interrupt him. Gibbon, if I recollect rightly, has discussed this question somewhere in his miscellaneous works: and at any rate, in his own practical experience was forced

into reviewing it, and found any uniform decision of it perplexing; so that, at different periods of his literary career, he came to a different adjudication of the case. But I should imagine that, with a single view to the interests of the reader, a distinction in the practice, governed by the principle which I have suggested, might be found most convenient.*

NOTES TO SHAKSPEARE.

The Name Shakspeare.—Page 1.

Mr Campbell, the latest editor of Shakspeare's dramatic works, observes that the "poet's name has been variously written Shaxpeare, Shackspeare, Shakspeare, and Shakspere;" to which varieties might be added Shagspere, from the Worcester Marriage License, published in 1836. But the fact is, that by combining with all the differences in spelling the first syllable, all those in spelling the second, more than twenty-five distinct varieties of the name may be expanded (like an algebraic series), for the choice of the curious in mis-spelling. Above all things, those varieties which arise from the intercalation of the middle *e* (that is, the *e* immediately before the final syllable *spear*), can never be overlooked by those who remember, at the opening of the Dunciad, the note upon this very question about the orthography of Shakspeare's name, as also upon the other great question about the title of the immortal Satire. Whether it ought not to have been the Dunceiade, seeing that Dunce, its great author and progenitor, cannot possibly dispense with the letter *e*. Meantime we must remark, that the first

* *In this volume the notes are arranged, as well as could be, according to the above plan.*

three of Mr Campbell's variations are mere caprices of the press; as is Shagspere; or, more probably, this last euphonious variety arose out of the gross clownish pronunciation of the two hiccuping "*marksmen*" who rode over to Worcester for the license: and one cannot forbear laughing at the bishop's secretary for having been so misled by two varlets, professedly incapable of signing their own names. The same drunken villains had cut down the bride's name *Hathaway* into *Hathwey*. Finally, to treat the matter with seriousness, Sir Frederick Madden has shown, in his recent letter to the Society of Antiquaries, that the poet himself in all probability wrote the name uniformly *Shakspere*. Orthography, both of proper names, of appellatives, and of words universally, was very unsettled up to a period long subsequent to that of Shakspeare. Still it must usually have happened, that names written variously and laxly by others would be written uniformly by the owners; especially by those owners who had occasion to sign their names frequently, and by literary people, whose attention was often, as well as consciously, directed to the proprieties of spelling. *Shakspeare* is now too familiar to the eye for any alteration to be attempted; but it is pretty certain that Sir Frederick Madden is right in stating the poet's own signature to have been uniformly *Shakspere*. It is so written twice in the course of his will, and it is so written on a blank leaf of Florio's English translation of Montaigne's Essays; a book recently discovered, and sold, on account of its autograph, for a hundred guineas.

Shakspeare's Reputation.—Page 19.

The necessity of compression obliges us to omit many arguments and references by which we could demonstrate the fact, that Shakspeare's reputation was always in a progressive state; allowing only for the interruption of about seventeen years, which this poet, in common with all others, sustained, not so much from the state of war (which did not fully occupy four of those years), as from the triumph of a gloomy fanaticism. Deduct the twenty-three years

of the seventeenth century which had elapsed before the first folio appeared, to this space add seventeen years of fanatical madness, during fourteen of which *all* dramatic entertainments were suppressed, the remainder is sixty years. And surely the sale of four editions of a vast folio in that space of time was an expression of an abiding interest. *No other poet, except Spenser, continued to sell throughout the century.* Besides, in arguing the case of a *dramatic* poet, we must bear in mind, that although readers of learned books might be diffused over the face of the land, the readers of poetry would be chiefly concentrated in the metropolis, and such persons would have no need to buy what they heard at the theatres. But then comes the question, whether Shakspeare kept possession of the theatres. And we are really humiliated by the gross want of sense which has been shown, by Malone chiefly, but also by many others, in discussing this question. From the restoration to 1682, says Malone, no more than four plays of Shakspeare's were performed by a principal company in London. "Such was the lamentable taste of those times, that the plays of Fletcher, Jonson, and Shirley, were much oftener exhibited than those of our author." What cant is this! If that taste were "lamentable," what are we to think of our own times, when plays a thousand times below those of Fletcher, or even of Shirley, continually displace Shakspeare? Shakspeare would himself have exulted in finding that he gave way only to dramatists so excellent. And, as we have before observed, both then and now, it is the very familiarity with Shakspeare which often banishes him from audiences honestly in quest of relaxation and amusement. Novelty is the very soul of such relaxation; but in our closets, when we are *not* unbending, when our minds are in a state of tension from intellectual cravings, then it is that we resort to Shakspeare; and oftentimes those who honour him most, like ourselves, are the most impatient of seeing his divine scenes disfigured by unequal representation (good, perhaps, in a single personation, bad in all the rest); or to hear his divine thoughts mangled in the recitation; or (which is worst of all) to hear them dishonoured and defeated by im-

perfect apprehension in the audience, or by defective sympathy. Meantime, if one theatre played only four of Shakspeare's dramas, another played at least seven. But the grossest folly of Malone is, in fancying the numerous alterations so many insults to Shakspeare, whereas they expressed as much homage to his memory as if the unaltered dramas had been retained. The substance *was* retained. The changes were merely concessions to the changing views of scenical propriety; sometimes, no doubt, made with a simple view to the revolution effected by Davenant at the restoration, in bringing *scenes* (in the painter's sense) upon the stage; sometimes also with a view to the altered fashions of the audience during the suspensions of the action, or perhaps to the introduction of *after-pieces*, by which, of course, the time was abridged for the main performance. A volume might be written upon this subject. Meantime let us never be told, that a poet was losing, or had lost his ground, who found in his lowest depression, amongst his almost idolatrous supporters, a great king distracted by civil wars, a mighty republican poet distracted by puritanical fanaticism, the greatest successor by far of that great poet, a papist and a bigoted royalist, and finally, the leading actor of the century, who gave and reflected the ruling impulses of his age.

Value of Asbies.—Page 32.

After all the assistance given to such equations between different times or different places by Sir George Shuckborough's tables, and other similar investigations, it is still a very difficult problem, complex, and, after all, merely tentative in the results, to assign the true value in such cases; not only for the obvious reason, that the powers of money have varied in different directions with regard to different objects, and in different degrees where the direction has on the whole continued the same, but because the very objects to be taken into computation are so indeterminate, and vary so much, not only as regards century and century, kingdom and kingdom, but also, even in the same century and the same kingdom, as

regards rank and rank. That which is a mere necessary to one, is a luxurious superfluity to another. And, in order to ascertain these differences, it is an indispensable qualification to have studied the habits and customs of the several classes concerned, together with the variations of those habits and customs.

Regard for Womanhood in England.—Page 41.

Never was the *esse quam videri* in any point more strongly discriminated than in this very point of gallantry to the female sex, as between England and France. In France, the verbal homage to woman is so excessive as to betray its real purpose,—viz. that it is a mask for secret contempt. In England, little is *said;* but, in the mean time, we allow our sovereign ruler to be a woman; which in France is impossible. Even that fact is of some importance, but less so than what follows. In every country whatsoever, if any principle has a deep root in the moral feelings of the people, we may rely upon its showing itself, by a thousand evidences, amongst the very lowest ranks, and in their daily intercourse, and their *undress* manners. Now in England there is, and always has been, a manly feeling, most widely diffused, of unwillingness to see labours of a coarse order, or requiring muscular exertions, thrown upon women. Pauperism, amongst other evil effects, has sometimes locally disturbed this predominating sentiment of Englishmen; but never at any time with such depth as to kill the root of the old hereditary manliness. Sometimes at this day a gentleman, either from carelessness, or from over-ruling force of convenience, or from real defect of gallantry, will allow a female servant to carry his portmanteau for him; though, after all, that spectacle is a rare one. And everywhere women of all ages engage in the pleasant, nay elegant, labours of the hay field; but in Great Britain women are never suffered to mow, which is a most athletic and exhausting labour, nor to load a cart, nor to drive a plough or hold it. In France, on the other hand, before the Revolution (at which period the pseudo-homage, the lip-honour, was far more ostentatiously

professed towards the female sex than at present), a Frenchman of credit, and vouching for his statement by the whole weight of his name and personal responsibility (M. Simond, now an American citizen), records the following abominable scene as one of no uncommon occurrence: A woman was in some provinces yoked side by side with an ass to the plough or the harrow; and M. Simond protests that it excited no horror to see the driver distributing his lashes impartially between the woman and her brute yoke-fellow. So much for the wordy pomps of French gallantry. In England, we trust, and we believe, that any man, caught in such a situation, and in such an abuse of his power (supposing the case otherwise a possible one), would be killed on the spot.

Slander of Corporal Punishment.—Page 55.

In a little memoir of Milton, which the author of this article drew up some years ago for a public society, and which is printed in an abridged shape,* he took occasion to remark, that Dr Johnson, who was meanly anxious to revive the slander against Milton, as well as some others, had supposed Milton himself to have this flagellation in his mind, and indirectly to confess it, in one of his Latin poems, where, speaking of Cambridge, and declaring that he has no longer any pleasure in the thoughts of revisiting that university, he says,—

> "Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,
> Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo."

This last line the malicious critic would translate—"And other things insufferable to a man of my temper." But as we then observed, *ingenium* is properly expressive of the *intellectual* constitution, whilst it is the *moral* constitution that suffers degradation from personal chastisement—the sense of honour, of personal dignity, of justice, &c. *Indoles* is the proper term for this latter idea, and in using the word *ingenium*, there cannot be a doubt that Milton alluded to the dry scholastic disputations, which were

* Works, vol. x. p. 79.

shocking and odious to his fine poetical genius. If, therefore, the vile story is still to be kept up in order to dishonour a great man, at any rate let it not in future be pretended that any countenance to such a slander can be drawn from the confessions of the poet himself.

Shakspeare's Station in Literature.—Page 71.

It will occur to many readers, that perhaps Homer may furnish the sole exception to this sweeping assertion: any *but* Homer is clearly and ludicrously below the level of the competition; but even Homer, "with his tail on (as the Scottish Highlanders say of their chieftains when belted by their ceremonial retinues), musters nothing like the force which *already* follows Shakspeare; and be it remembered, that Homer sleeps, and has long slept as a subject of criticism or commentary, while in Germany as well as England, and *now even in France*, the gathering of wits to the vast equipage of Shakspeare is advancing in an accelerated ratio. There is, in fact, a great delusion current upon this subject. Innumerable references to Homer, and brief critical remarks on this or that pretension of Homer, this or that scene, this or that passage, lie scattered over literature ancient and modern; but the express works dedicated to the separate service of Homer are, after all, not many. In Greek we have only the large Commentary of Eustathius, and the Scholia of Didymus, &c.; in French little or nothing before the prose translation of the seventeenth century, which Pope esteemed "elegant," and the skirmishings of Madame Dacier, La Motte, &c.; in English, besides the various translations and their prefaces (which, by the way, began as early as 1555), nothing of much importance until the elaborate preface of Pope to the Iliad, and his elaborate postscript to the Odyssey—nothing certainly before that, and very little indeed since that, except Wood's Essay on the Life and Genius of Homer. On the other hand, of the books written in illustration or investigation of Shakspeare, a very considerable library might be formed in England, and another in Germany.

CALIBAN.— Page 80.

Caliban has not yet been thoroughly fathomed. For all Shakspeare's great creations are like works of nature, subjects of unexhaustible study. It was this character of whom Charles I. and some of his ministers expressed such fervent admiration; and, among other circumstances, most justly they admired the new language almost with which he is endowed, for the purpose of expressing his fiendish and yet carnal thoughts of hatred to his master. Caliban is evidently not meant for scorn, but for abomination mixed with fear and partial respect. He is purposely brought into contrast with the drunken Trinculo and Stephano, with an advantageous result. He is much more intellectual than either, uses a more elevated language, not disfigured by vulgarisms, and is not liable to the low passion for plunder as they are. He is mortal, doubtless, as his "dam" (for Shakspeare will not call her mother) Sycorax. But he inherits from her such qualities of power as a witch could be supposed to bequeath. He trembles indeed before Prospero; but that is, as we are to understand, through the moral superiority of Prospero in Christian wisdom; for when he finds himself in the presence of dissolute and unprincipled men, he rises at once into the dignity of intellectual power.

NOTES TO POPE.

POPE'S BIRTH-DAY.—Page 85.

Dr Johnson, however, and Joseph Warton, for reasons not stated, have placed his birth on the 22d. To this statement, as opposed to that which comes from the personal friends of Pope, little attention is due. Ruffhead and Spence, upon such questions, must always be of higher authority than Johnson and Warton, and *à fortiori* than Bowles. But it ought not to be concealed, though

hitherto unnoticed by any person, that some doubt after all remains whether *any* of the biographers is right. An anonymous writer, contemporary with Pope, and evidently familiar with his personal history, declares that he was born on the 8th of June; and he connects it with an event that, having a public and a partisan interest (the birth of that Prince of Wales, who was known twenty-seven years afterwards as the Pretender), would serve to check his own recollections, and give them a collateral voucher. It is true he wrote for an ill-natured purpose; but no purpose whatever could have been promoted by falsifying this particular date. What is still more noticeable, however, Pope himself puts a most emphatic negative upon all these statements. In a pathetic letter to a friend, when his attention could not have been wandering, for he is expressly insisting upon a sentiment which will find an echo in many a human heart,—viz., that a birthday, though from habit usually celebrated as a festal day, too often is secretly a memorial of disappointment, and an anniversary of sorrowful meaning,—he speaks of the very day on which he is then writing as his own birthday; and indeed what else could give any propriety to the passage? Now the date of this letter is January 1, 1733. Surely Pope knew his own birthday better than those who have adopted a random rumour without investigation.

But, whilst we are upon this subject, we must caution the readers of Pope against too much reliance upon the chronological accuracy of his editors. *All* are scandalously careless; and generally they are faithless. Many allusions are left unnoticed, which a very little research would have illustrated; many facts are omitted, even yet recoverable, which are essential to the just appreciation of Pope's satirical blows; and dates are constantly misstated. Mr Roscoe is the most careful of Pope's editors; but even he is often wrong. For instance, he has taken the trouble to write a note upon Pope's humorous report to Lord Burlington of his Oxford journey on horseback with Lintot; and this note involves a sheer impossibility. The letter is undated, except as to the month; and Mr Roscoe directs the reader to supply 1714 as

the true date, which is a gross anachronism. For a ludicrous anecdote is there put into Lintot's mouth, representing some angry critic, who had been turning over Pope's *Homer* with frequent *pshaws*, as having been propitiated, by Mr Lintot's dinner, into a gentler feeling towards Pope, and finally, by the mere effect of good cheer, without an effort on the publisher's part, as coming to a confession, that what he ate and what he had been reading were equally excellent. But in the year 1714, *no part* of Pope's "Homer" was printed. June 1715 was the month in which even the subscribers first received the four earliest books of the "Iliad," and the public generally not until July. This we notice by way of specimen. In itself, or as an error of mere negligence, it would be of little importance; but it is a case to which Mr Roscoe has expressly applied his own conjectural skill, and solicited the attention of his reader. We may judge, therefore, of his accuracy in other cases which he did not think worthy of examination.

There is another instance, presenting itself in every page, of ignorance concurring with laziness on the part of all Pope's editors, and with the effect not so properly of misleading as of perplexing the general reader. Until Lord Macclesfield's bill for altering the style, in the very middle of the eighteenth century, six years therefore after the death of Pope, there was a custom, arising from the collision between the civil and ecclesiastical year, of dating the whole period that lies between December 31st and March 25th (both days *exclusively*) as belonging indifferently to the past or the current year. This peculiarity had nothing to do with the old and new style, but was, we believe, redressed by the same act of Parliament. Now in Pope's time it was absolutely necessary that a man should use this double date, because else he was liable to be seriously misunderstood. For instance, it was then always said that Charles I. had suffered on the 30th of January $164\frac{8}{9}$; and why? Because, had the historian fixed the date to what it really was, 1649, in that case all those (a very numerous class) who supposed the year 1649 to commence on Ladyday, or March 25, would

have understood him to mean that this event happened in what we *now* call 1650, for not until 1650 was there any January which *they* would have acknowledged as belonging to 1649, since *they* added to the year 1648 all the days from January 1 to March 24. On the other hand, if he had said simply that Charles suffered in 1648, he would have been truly understood by the class we have just mentioned; but by another class, who began the year from the 1st of January, he would have been understood to mean what we *now* mean by the year 1648. There would have been a sheer difference, not of one, as the reader might think at first sight, but of *two* entire years in the chronology of the two parties; which difference, and all possibility of doubt, is met and remedied by the fractional date $\frac{1648}{1649}$; for that date says in effect it was 1648 to you who do not open the new year till Ladyday; it was 1649 to you who open it from January 1. Thus much to explain the real sense of the case; and it follows from this explanation, that no part of the year ever *can* have the fractional or double date except the interval from January 1 to March 24 inclusively. And hence arises a practical inference,—viz., that the very same reason, and no other, which formerly enjoined the use of the compound or fractional date,—viz., the prevention of a capital ambiguity or dilemma, now enjoins its omission. For in our day, when the double opening of the year is abolished, what sense is there in perplexing a reader by using a fraction which offers him a choice without directing him how to choose. In fact, it is the *denominator* of the fraction, if one may so style the lower figure, which expresses to a modern eye the true year. Yet the editors of Pope, as well as many other writers, have confused their readers by this double date; and why? Simply because they were confused themselves. Many errors in literature of large extent have arisen from this confusion. Thus it was said properly enough in the contemporary accounts—for instance, in Lord Monmouth's *Memoirs*—that Queen Elizabeth died on the last day of the year 1602, for she died on the 24th of March; and by a careful writer this event

would have been dated as March 24, $\frac{1602}{1603}$. But many writers, misled by the phrase above cited, have asserted that James I. was proclaimed on the 1st of January 1603. Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, again, has ruined the entire chronology of the life of Jeremy Taylor, and unconsciously vitiated the facts, by not understanding this fractional date. Mr Roscoe even too often leaves his readers to collect the true year as they can: thus, *e.g.*, at p. 500 of his Life, he quotes from Pope's letter to Warburton, in great vexation for the surreptitious publication of his letters in Ireland, under date of February 4, $174\frac{0}{1}$. But why not have printed it intelligibly as 1741? Incidents there are in most men's lives which are susceptible of a totally different moral value, according as they are dated in one year or another. That might be a kind and honourable liberality in 1740 which would be a fraud upon creditors in 1741. Exile to a distance of 10 miles from London in January 1744, might argue that a man was a turbulent citizen and suspected of treason; whilst the same exile in January 1745 would simply argue that, as a Papist, he had been included amongst his whole body in a general measure of precaution to meet the public dangers of that year. This explanation we have thought it right to make, both for its extensive application to *all* editions of Pope, and on account of the serious blunders which have arisen from the case when ill understood; and because, in a work upon education, written jointly by Messrs Lant Carpenter and Shephard, though generally men of ability and learning, this whole point is erroneously explained.

POPE'S REMOVAL FROM TWYFORD SCHOOL.—Page 91.

This, however, was not Twyford, according to an anonymous pamphleteer of the times, but a Catholic seminary in Devonshire Street,—that is, in the Bloomsbury district of London; and the same author asserts that the scene of his disgrace, as indeed seems

probable beforehand, was not the first but the last of his arenas as a schoolboy. Which indeed was first, and which last, is very unimportant; but with a view to another point, which is not without interest, namely, as to the motive of Pope for so bitter a lampoon as we must suppose it to have been, as well as with regard to the topics which he used to season it, this anonymous letter throws the only light which has been offered; and strange it is that no biographer of Pope should have hunted upon the traces indicated by him. Any solution of Pope's virulence, and of the master's bitter retaliation, even *as* a solution, is so far entitled to attention; apart from which the mere straightforwardness of this man's story, and its minute circumstantiality, weigh greatly in its favour. To our thinking he unfolds the whole affair in the simple explanation, nowhere else to be found, that the master of the school, the mean avenger of a childish insult by a bestial punishment, was a Mr Bromley, one of James II.'s Popish apostates; whilst the particular statements which he makes with respect to himself and the young Duke of Norfolk of 1700, as two schoolfellows of Pope at that time and place, together with his voluntary promise to come forward in person and verify his account if it should happen to be challenged; are all, we repeat, so many presumptions in favour of his veracity. "Mr Alexander Pope," says he, "before he had been four months at this school, or was able to construe "Tully's Offices," employed his muse in satirizing his master. It was a libel of at least one hundred verses, which (a fellow-student having given information of it) was found in his pocket; and the young satirist was soundly whipped, and kept a prisoner to his room for seven days; whereupon his father fetched him away, and I have been told he never went to school more." This Bromley, it has been ascertained, was the son of a country gentleman in Worcestershire, and must have had considerable prospects at one time, since it appears that he had been a gentleman-commoner at Christ's Church, Oxford. There is an error in the punctuation of the letter we have just quoted which affects the sense in a way very important to the question before us. Bromley is described as "one of King James's

converts in Oxford, some years *after* that prince's abdication;" but if this were really so, he must have been a conscientious convert. The latter clause should be connected with what follows:—"*Some years after that prince's abdication he kept a little seminary;*" that is, when his mercenary views in quitting his religion were effectually defeated, when the Boyne had sealed his despair, he humbled himself into a petty schoolmaster. These facts are interesting, because they suggest at once the motive for the merciless punishment inflicted upon Pope. His own father was a Papist like Bromley, but a sincere and honest Papist, who had borne double taxes, legal stigmas, and public hatred for conscience' sake. His contempt was habitually pointed at those who tampered with religion for interested purposes. His son inherited these upright feelings. And we may easily guess what would be the bitter sting of any satire he would write on Bromley. Such a topic was too true to be forgiven, and too keenly barbed by Bromley's conscience. By the way, this writer, like ourselves, reads in this juvenile adventure a prefiguration of Pope's satirical destiny.

Pope as a Scholar.—Page 102.

Meantime, the felicities of this translation are at times perfectly astonishing; and it would be scarcely possible to express more nervously or amply the words,—

> " . . . . . *jurisque secundi*
> *Ambitus impatiens*, et summo dulcius unum
> Stare loco . . . . . ."

than this child of fourteen has done in the following couplet, which, most judiciously, by reversing the two clauses, gains the power of fusing them into connection:—

> " And impotent desire to reign alone,
> *That scorns the dull reversion of a throne.*"

But the passage for which, beyond all others, we must make room, is a series of eight lines, corresponding to six in the original, and this for two reasons: First, because Dr Joseph Warton has deli-

berately asserted, that in our whole literature "we have scarcely eight more beautiful lines than these;" and though few readers will subscribe to so sweeping a judgment, yet certainly these must be wonderful lines for a boy which could challenge such commendation from an experienced *polyhistor* of infinite reading. Secondly, because the lines contain a night-scene. Now it must be well known to many readers, that the famous night-scene in the "Iliad," so familiar to every school-boy, has been made the subject, for the last thirty years, of severe, and in many respects, of just criticisms. This description will therefore have a double interest by comparison; whilst, whatever may be thought of either taken separately for itself, considered as a translation, this which we now quote is as true to Statius as the other is undoubtedly faithless to Homer:—

"*Jamque per emeriti surgens confinia Phœbi*
Titanis, late mundo subvecta silenti
Rorifera gelidum tenuaverat aera biga.
Jam pecudes volucresque tacent: jam somnus ovaris
Insurpit curis, pronusque per aera nutat,
Grata laboratæ referens oblivia vitæ."

Theb. i. 336-341.

"'Twas now the time when Phœbus yields to night,
And rising Cynthia shed her silver light;
Wide o'er the world in solemn pomp she drew
Her airy chariot hung with pearly dew.
All birds and beasts lie hushed. Sleep steals away
The wild desires of men and toils of day;
And brings, descending through the silent air,
A sweet forgetfulness of human care."

NOTE TO A TORY'S ACCOUNT OF TORYISM.

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And, by the way, *another* revolution was then silently prepared, upon the cause of which there has been much disputing without result; simply because one cause only was assigned, when in fact there were two. Mr Bulwer, of late ("England and the English"), Lord Auckland many years ago, and numbers beside, have ridiculed those who deduce English pauperism from the suppression of the monasteries. *Early* in the reign of Henry VIII., says Mr Bulwer, and therefore *before* the dissolution of these religious houses, there are, in express laws and elsewhere, indications of pauperism. Certainly, pauperism, as a national disease, *began* in the previous reign. Latimer alone, writing in Edward VI.'s time, an author upon whom elsewhere Mr Bulwer relies, complains heavily of the extensive depopulations in progress for some time back. There, where formerly flourished a populous village, we find now-a-days a single shepherd boy or two, tending large flocks of sheep. I quote his meaning, though not his exact words, not having his sermons at hand. Now, it is clear to any reflecting reader, that, on the one hand, these changes must have been going on through one or two generations previous to the date of Latimer's sermons, which suppose 1550; otherwise they could not have been so extensively accomplished, as the very nature of his complaint implies. Yet, on the other hand, it is equally clear, that Latimer points in these complaints to a state of things still within the memory of his elder auditors; he is making his comparison between a vicious present (as *he* views it) and a happier past. But the transition he denounces as even then going on, and the two states then equally under the cognizance of the existing generation. For it could not have answered any purpose to fix the eyes of man upon some Arcadian condition of remote ages, or of merely possible prosperity. Latimer is manifestly bemoaning a revolution, yet raw and

unreconciled,—one which had passed within the knowledge of those to whom he appealed,—which was in fact still going onwards. In one place he dates the change expressly from his grandfather's time. The case, therefore, tells its own history. Henry VII. had operated upon the feudal habits of the aristocracy by two separate acts: 1*st*, By abolishing the long trains of martial retainers; 2*dly*, By removing the bars to the alienation and subdivision of landed estates. These two acts aided each other. The nobility, finding no benefits of feudal pomp in a large body of dependants,—these being now by law rendered utterly useless for show or for defence,—began necessarily to seek some countervailing benefits from the territorial domains hitherto applied to the support of a vast retinue now suddenly made unavailable by law. Lands were now applied to the purposes prescribed by rural economy. Many were consequently turned into sheep walks; and those which were otherwise applied, as for instance to agriculture, were still able to disencumber themselves of a large surplus population. The economic use of land had now superseded the feudal use. The *maximum* of produce from the *minimum* of labour, had now become the problem for all land whatsoever. And, as the produce, thus continually increasing, with a continually decreasing amount of labour, could no longer be consumed in kind, hence arose a continually greater opening for exotic luxuries. These tastes, with other consequences, formed so many increasing temptations to the alienation of estates, the facilities for which had been prepared concurrently. Upon this breaking up of the great feudal and ecclesiastical estates, arose a new order of secondary aristocracy; a gentry, formed in part from the younger brothers of the upper aristocracy, in part from the magnates of towns. That was one effect; but another—that other with which we are now concerned—was, that an immense surplus of population was thrown off upon the nation. This formed a stream continually increasing; and, in the following reign, this stream became confluent with another stream from the monasteries. And these two bodies of surplus population, making, perhaps, not less than 350,000 souls in a total population of nearly 5,000,000, composed the

original *fundus* of the pauperism for which Elizabeth provided,—first, by a crude law in the beginning of her reign; secondly, by an improved law towards the close of it—which last law has ever since formed the basis of our pauper code. Those who have read the book of Lord Selkirk, published about thirty years ago, are aware that the very same process was repeated in the Scottish Highlands after the rebellion of 1745–6, and the abolition of the heritable jurisdictions. Martial retainers, and the very purpose to which only they could be applied,—viz., feudal quarrels,—were then severely and resolutely put down by Government; forts were built, military roads opened, permanent garrisons established, to enforce the new policy of a Government at once strong and enlightened, provident and vindictive. The chieftains, like the English nobles, were obliged to seek a new use in their retainers; which use, it was soon found, could be better attained from the tenth than from the whole. *Πλεον ημισυ παντος.* The nine-tenths were therefore turned adrift. In Scotland, as previously in England, it took about two generations to bring the principle into full play; for the lords, as also the chieftains, were variously situated, and were of various tempers; some catching eagerly, and from the first, at the utmost gain; others hankering to the *last* after their ancient usages and their hereditary pomp. So far the cases were the same in England and in Scotland. But one capital difference arose from the general circumstances of the country. After 1745 there was an outlet for all the surplus Scotch Highlanders, in the British colonies; and, accordingly, Lork Selkirk himself turned a streng current of emigration into Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of St Lawrence; and afterwards, when that island was sufficiently colonised, into the Canadas. But for England, during the sixty years of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. (1485–1545), there was no outlet whatever. The whole surplus was thrown back upon the domestic resources of the land. And, doubtless, many a fierce retainer, as also many a big-boned monk, was to be found amongst those "masterful beggars," "stout thieves," and "Abraham men," who plagued our ancestors so much during the sixteenth century, and were so plentifully and

so frivolously hanged. This deduction of pauperism, though collateral to my main purpose, I have thought it right to give; because the subject is so much of a *quæstio vexatia;* because no party has hit upon the whole truth; because that solution, to which Mr Bulwer and others object, is half the truth; and because the previous and the confluent cause, which I now allege, makes the complement, or other half of the truth. The paupers of England arose out of two acts emanating from Henry VII. as well as from that single act of his son, which, doubtless, taken by itself, is insufficient to meet the case.

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